

# SLOVAKIA

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## THE TRUE FACE OF SLOVAKIA

Joseph M. Kirschbaum, M.A., LL.D.

There is a peculiar phenomenon in the political and historical works of American or English scholars about Slovakia. With the exception of the British author C. A. Macartney, followed to a certain extent by A. J. D. Taylor and professor Seton-Watson, the Anglo-Saxon history writers and publicists show not only a considerable lack of knowledge of historical facts concerning Slovakia, but they serve, probably unconsciously, the aims of imperialistic tendencies of some Central-European peoples. For many of them "Slovak is the name given to the easternmost division of the Czech speaking people" <sup>(1)</sup> and they seem to know nothing about the fact that the Slovaks were among the first Slavonic peoples converted to Christianity and that as early as the ninth century they founded the first Slavonic state, known in history under the name of the Great Moravian Empire <sup>(2)</sup>; they also persistently present Slovakia as a backward agrarian country marked by illiteracy and poverty.

This misrepresentation happens especially when comparison is made between Slovaks and, in the Anglo-Saxon world, the very favored Czechs who are, from the linguistic point of view, quite close to the Slovaks, from the cultural and historical standpoint, however, quite different. Or as Wm. Diamond writes: "Slovakia and the Czech lands are two areas speaking quite similar languages but having different histories and political traditions. They have a deep-rooted and intense distrust, sometimes amounting to antipathy, for each other. A thousand years of separation, during which political and economic development went off on different tracks, were neither forgotten nor overcome after the establishment of the (Czecho-Slovak) Republic."

The line followed by Anglo-Saxon writers when speaking about Slovakia is nearly the same as that expressed in the books of J. S. Roucek (*Eastern-Central Europe, crucible of world wars*, and *Slavonic Encyclopedia*) and R. J. Kerner (*Czechoslovakia*), who as late as 1946-1949 presented Slovakia as follows:

1. "In the Slovak province of Czechoslovakia, for instance, as many as 57 per cent could not read and write. The (Czechoslovak) Republic established middle-school and university education in Slovakia, where it was practically non-existent before 1918." — J. S. Roucek (3).

2. "Whereas the standard of literacy among the Czechs was high, the percentage of Slovaks who could read and write was very low in 1919. For that reason, many officials, teachers and intellectuals from the Czech regions had to be sent to Slovakia" — Kerner (4).

3. The Slovaks are according to Mr. Roucek "simple and pastoral" and in the opinion of Mr. Kerner "the Slovaks remained agriculturists and under a Magyar (that is, Eastern) type of culture."

This portrayal of Slovakia is so general in the American and English press that to many people, who are not acquainted with the Slovak past and the actual circumstances, it may appear not only probable but true. Slovakia has been presented in this light for about 35 years. The world is supposed to believe that culture, literacy and civilization were brought into Slovakia only by the Czechs in 1918-19, according to these "scientific revelations", and that Slovakia remained even during the last 30 years predominantly agrarian, pastoral and illiterate.

What is the truth?

Now, the truth is quite different. After having lost their political independence in the tenth and definitely in the 13th century in favor of the Hungarians, the Slovaks did not appear in European history as a political factor for many centuries. Germans, Hungarians and Czechs, who in a common effort succeeded to disintegrate the first Slovak State, could not, however, destroy the civilization which had already existed in that country. As a result Slovakia became even under the Hungarian rule a first-rate cultural centre in Central Europe with a university at Bratislava as early as the 15th century and a Catholic university in the 17th century at Trnava (5).

The culture spread from these universities developed, naturally, not in the Slovak, but in the Latin language, a general phenomenon at that time in Central Europe. Nevertheless, it was a culture of the population of Slovakia which at all times has been predominantly of Slovak origin, and the archives prove that the majority of professors and students was Slovak also.

The same rule can be applied to the epoch when, under the influence of nationalism, the Hungarians began to demand the use of the Magyar language instead of the Latin and when expressions of growing national consciousness of the non-Magyar nationalities were answered by an increased attempt at Magyarization. It is true that Slovak schools were closed by the Hungarian regime in the last decades of the 19th century, and nobody can deny the tendency of Budapest to assimilate the Slovak population. On the other hand, it is false and tendencious to say that Slovakia before 1918 was a backward and illiterate country and that culture was brought into Slovakia by Czech teachers and intellectuals. If we can measure the cultural level of any country by the number of schools, as it is generally done, then the statistics regarding the number of schools in Slovakia at the end of the Hungarian rule (1918) and at the end of the Czech rule (1939) obviously deny the Czech propaganda about the illiteracy and the Czech cultural mission in Slovakia. The data published in this regard by a former member of the Prague government, Prof. A. Stefanek (6) give us the following picture:

#### A) Number of public schools in Slovakia

	1917-18	1937-38
Schools administered by church ----	2723	2487
Schools administered by state -----	797	1104
Total -----	3520	3591

#### B) Number of high schools in Slovakia

	1918-19	1936-37
High schools -----	44	46
Teachers' schools -----	15	16
Total -----	61	63



The number of students at the above schools in 1918 was 15,354; and in 1939 — 23,937; but only 20,018 of them were of Slovak origin.

As far as the percentage of Slovaks who could not read and write is concerned, the above quoted statement of Prof. Roucek is obviously at odds with the truth. Unfortunately, there are in exile no statistics available about the situation in this regard in Slovakia at the end of the Hungarian rule. But if we take into consideration the fact that according to the official Czech statistics there were in 1930 only 6.8% inhabitants of Slovak origin who could not read and write and the number of schools was as shown above, it may be safely assumed that in 1919, when the number of schools was nearly the same, the percentage of analphabets could hardly be much different. Logic does not admit any doubt in this regard. At present about 3% of the inhabitants of Slovakia cannot read and write, which means that Slovakia comes not only before many Central-European countries, but is much ahead of countries like Italy, Spain, etc.

## II

As false at the presentation of Slovakia in the light of illiteracy is also any talk about Slovakia's economic backwardness. After the first World War when the Slovaks and Czechs came together, it was decided by the Czech government that Slovakia must remain an agricultural complement of the Czech lands. Consequently, the rise in the industrial population of Slovakia which began in the 19th century, when the industrial revolution took hold in Hungary, not only began to slow down, but, according to Macartney, one third of Slovakia's industry was dismantled and destroyed by the Czech banks and industrialists who did not wish to have any competition in Slovakia (7).

Despite these anti-Slovak economic measures of the Prague government and Czech industrialists, the majority of Slovakia's population was neither "pastoral" nor agrarian. According to Czech official statistics the percentage of Slovakia's population which gave their occupation as agriculture was as follows (8):

Year	%
1900 -----	63.0
1921 -----	60.6
1930 -----	56.8

Measured by Central-European standards, Slovakia in 1930 was one of the well industrialized countries, since in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Yugoslavia the percentage of agrarian population at that time was much higher (Poland 69%, Bulgaria 80%, Romania 80%, etc.) even according Mr. Roucek's "Central Eastern Europe".

Since 1930 the above percentage changed in Slovakia to a considerable extent, especially during the years 1939-1945. Wm. Diamond in his book "Czechoslovakia between East and West" — very favorable to the post-war Czechoslovakia and to Czechs writes in this regard:

"Slovakia's brief experience as an independent state had a salutary effect on its industry, which expanded in an effort to replace products once obtained from the factories of the Czech lands and, under German pressure, to increase the output of armaments. The establishment of new enterprises and the increase in the number of industrial workers raised the importance of Slovak industry in the country as a whole. The industrial capacity of Slovakia increased particularly in metal- and wood-working, mining, textiles, footwear, and food processing" (9).

The Czech Minister on Industry described the situation as follows:

"On the whole, it may be said of Slovak industry that its development in the last few years, with the exception of armament production, was, comparatively speaking, quick and sound. It is true that not many new factories have been built, but many of the existing ones have been enlarged and modernized. The most important structural change has been an increased emphasis on metallurgy, textiles and, to a certain extent, on mining" (10).

The Communist regime in Slovakia did not stop this development. On the contrary, if we can trust Communist statistics, many new industries have been built in Slovakia and the percentage of the population working in agriculture should be only about 35% at the present time. The regime is inhuman, tyrannic and cruel, but it changes the social structure of Slovakia in favor of the industrial "proletariat" not only in order to furnish Russia industrial products, but also because of political reasons: a peasant is considered an enemy of Communism.

### III

While, consciously or unconsciously, American authors present, under the cover of "scientific" works, the Slovak people as a part of the Czech nation and Slovakia as a backward country in order to support the Czech claim to rule over Slovakia, life marks quite different tracks of evolution in the relations between Czechs and Slovaks.

"Slovak tradition and economy stand as a barrier between Czechs and Slovaks," writes Wm. Diamond and continues:

"So important was the Slovak problem in the minds of both Czech and Slovak leaders, that it was a major subject of study and debate during the war and has continued to be ever since. An effort was made to solve the problem in 1945 in the Kosice Programme, in which Czechs and Slovaks are defined as two distinct nations united by common interest in a single state. This is in itself a complete reversal of the ethnic theory on which the first Republic was built: the belief that Czechs and Slovaks constituted a single nation. The Kosice Program further provided that "the Slovaks should be the masters in their Slovak lands, just as the Czechs in their Czech homeland" and that the government "will regard the Slovak National Council not only as the rightful representative of the individual Slovak nation, but also as the bearer of sovereign right on Slovak territory" (11).

The same change as in the political relations between Czechs and Slovaks was brought about in regard to the



general level of civilization in Slovakia. Already during the Second World War there was no lack of trained and educated officials, professors, lawyers, physicians, etc., but a considerable surplus. When the "Czechoslovak Republic" had been restored against the wishes of the majority of Slovakia's population in 1945 and about 5 thousand Slovak intellectuals left the country and other thousands were jailed, deported to Siberia, and confined in concentration camps for alleged collaboration with Nazis, but in fact for their anti-Communism, there was no difficulty to replace them, because the trend of civilization and development, which, since the First World War, brought to maturity and self-government about 30 former colonies and mandatory territories, did not stop in Slovakia in order to fulfill the wishes of some Czech politicians who desired to see Slovakia as a backward country and the Slovaks as a part of the Czech nation.

Slovakia developed considerably not only economically during its short separation from the Czech lands, but also from the point of view of culture and civilization. This can be seen again in the light of statistics concerning the number of university students during the Czech rule (1918-38) and during the Slovakia's independence (1939-45) published by Prof. Stefanek.

After 20 years of Czech rule in Slovakia, there were at the University in Bratislava in the schoolyear 1938-39 only 1535 students of Slovak origin, but this number increased to 4485 in the third year of Slovakia's independence (1942-43), while about 500 others studied abroad. Altogether, during the five years of Slovakia's separation from Czechs, 14,965 students studied at the University of Bratislava, which also became an attractive center for foreign students. In the year 1941-42, for instance, there were 518 students from Bulgaria, 120 Czech students, 154 Germans, 106 Russians, 171 Hungarians and many others.

As far as the professors were concerned, out of a total of 107 professors, 78 were of Slovak origin, 20 Czechs, 7 Russians, one German, one Italian; the 159 assistants and lecturers were all of Slovak origin (12).

This is the true face of Slovakia, presented by some

American writers and university professors as a backward country of illiteracy and poverty. Do not American students deserve professors and lecturers who respect facts and the truth more objectively and more consistently?

(1) J. S. Rouček, *Central Eastern Europe*, New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1946, p. 353; 2) Dr. Milan Hodža, *Federation in Central Europe*, London, Jarolds, 1942, pp. 85-94, 104, 131, etc.; 3) Ibidem, p. 354; 4) "Czechoslovakia" edited by R. J. Kerner, University of California Press, Berkeley, Cal. 1949, pp. 184-185; 5) Dr. M. Hodža, op. cit.; 6) Anton Štefánek, *Zur Sociographie Der Geistigen Kultur in der Slowakei*, Academia Scientiarum et Artium Slovaca, Bratislava, 1944, pp. 404-405; 7) C. A. Macartney, *Hungary and Her Successors*, London, 1937; 8) *Annuaire statistique de la République Tchéco-Slovaque*, 1938, p. 15; 9) William Diamond, *Czechoslovakia between East and West*, London, Stevens and Sons Ltd., 1947, p. 172; 10) *Průmyslový Věstník*, March 10, 1947, p. 180-1; 11) Ibidem, p. 50; 12) A. Štefánek, op. cit., p. 413-15.

WHO SAID IT? — "Basically our political program, our political line, completely agrees with the line and the program of the Slovak Communist Party. Up to the rebellion there really was no difference between an adherent of the Slovak Communist Party and an adherent of the Democratic Party. When did this relationship deteriorate? I think it was after our complete liberation. Well, in general, there can be no talk about any great deterioration. But I think that if we let ourselves get drunk by our present victory in the elections and if, incidentally, even the effectiveness of the Slovak Communist Party should decrease because of the factual failure in the elections, then we would fail and the communists also would fail. I emphasize that we must mutually help each other and that all of us must solve common problems together, because once and for all time we must realize that there is no fundamental difference between the Slovak Communist Party and the Democratic Party. Differences have appeared and are appearing, but only in methods." — (Dr. Joseph Lettrich, former Chairman of the Slovak Democratic Party and President of the Slovak National Council and now Vice-President of the Council of Free Czechoslovakia: "My 46" — No. 23, June 8, 1946 — Prague).

WHO SAID IT? — "The religious cleft (between the Slovaks and the Czechs) is deep. For the Czechs, Master John Hus was and is not only a religious but essentially a national figure; and, if the nation returned to Catholicism under the pressure of the Counter-Reformation, it is a truism that every Czech is a Hussite at heart — a Hussite in the wider sense of the term, denoting a blend of somewhat self-assertive nationalism with a "Protestant" attitude towards all authority, social, national, or religious, which is felt to be in any way alien. For the Slovaks, Hussitism was the alien doctrine, Catholicism the natural faith." — (C. A. Macartney: *HUNGARY AND HER SUCCESSORS* — London, 1937).

## BUILDING ANOTHER BRIDGE?

General Lev Prchala, head of the Czech National Committee in London, broke with Dr. Edward Beneš when he could no longer suffer in silence his dictatorial, imperious and pro-Soviet policy. It happened in London during the war. Prchala lost his love for Beneš in 1938, when he capitulated to the Munich Agreement without the consent of the Czecho-Slovak Parliament, then resigned from the Presidency, thus surrendering his country, lock, stock and barrel, to Hitler without offering the slightest physical resistance, and then cowardly fled to London.

From that time on, Prchala regarded Beneš and his political clique — the Czech National Socialists, or Czech Nazis, as they are referred to — as hypocrites and frauds who belched forth volumes of democratic slogans and speeches, but kept driving Czecho-Slovakia and the whole of Europe into the clutches of Moscow.

In the February 9, 1953, issue of the "České Listy" (Czech News), the official organ of Prchala's group, the General relates another incident to prove the hypocrisy of the (in)famous bridge-builder, Dr. Edward Beneš, who brought Communism into Czecho-Slovakia and Central Europe to threaten the security and democratic life of the entire European continent. The incident goes back to the time of the presidential elections in 1935.

Uncertain of the support of the Catholics in the various parties, especially the support of the Slovaks, because Dr. Edward Beneš did contribute many articles to "free-thinking" periodicals and was a Freemason even before World War I, his followers (at his behest) suddenly discovered that Beneš was a "loyal son of the Roman Catholic Church since the day he was born." Monsignor John Šrámek's captains in his Czech People's Party took up the cry, even though Šrámek knew better, and used every means to convince the Vatican that Beneš really was a "loyal son" of the Catholic Church.

Prchala claims that eventually the Šrámek Czechs put their story across and Rome urgently requested the Catho-



lic members of the Czecho-Slovak National Assembly to vote and work for the election of Dr. Edward Beneš. We know that Beneš was elected. Even the Slovaks voted for him without a dissenting vote, because Dr. Joseph Tiso had convinced them to do so on the strength of the promise made by Beneš that Slovakia would be granted full autonomy within a year. We know that Beneš never fulfilled that promise, or even meant to fulfill it. And he repaid Dr. Joseph Tiso in 1947 by sending him to the gallows. That's the kind of man Beneš was.

What happened after the elections of 1935, as told by Prchala, will undoubtedly shock even the most ardent admirers of Beneš, General Lev Prchala says:

"After the presidential elections, it was by sheer accident that the edge of the curtain, which had hidden the reality, was raised. After the election of Beneš as president, I was just leaving the Vladislav Hall in the Prague Castle, when suddenly I overheard a very familiar voice sing out in open rapture: 'Well, we put it across, didn't we?!' The sentence was spoken in good Russian. I was right — it really was Alexandrovský, the Russian ambassador, who was joyously swinging his arms. The intoxication over the success was stronger than the diplomatic reserve for which I had previously known him. Those Russian words opened my eyes.

"When I resigned from the function of Vice-Commander of the Czecho-Slovak General Staff in 1933 and went to eastern Slovakia, I was quite a distance from everything that was taking place in Prague. I was a soldier and not a politician; I did not belong to any party, but internal and foreign developments did interest me. As I traveled by train from Košice to Prague, I met the Slovak deputies and senators. I learned that Hlinka's party probably would vote for Beneš in the presidential elections. This surprised me and, therefore, after my arrival in Prague I sought the reason for Hlinka's turning over to the Castle and to Beneš. I found out that the Vatican had recommended Beneš to Hlinka.

"However, after accidentally overhearing the words of Ambassador Alexandrovský, it was clear to me that Beneš was Stalin's candidate! I was aware that the Vatican knowingly could not recommend a candidate of the Bolsheviks. The explanation was simple: the Vatican was a victim of an unheard of hoax!"

It is very much possible that even now some of the Beneš "Czechoslovaks" are trying to deceive the Vatican. The publishers of the "Tribuna" (The Tribune), the official organ of the "Czechoslovak Foreign Institute in Exile" published in Paris, do not say so directly, but their articles tend in that direction. The socialists writing for the "Tribuna" keep on bringing up T. G. Masaryk and his statement that the problem of the significance of Czech history is a religious question. Of course, they conveniently forget to mention that T. G. Masaryk had the Czech Reformation in mind and that at the time he had said those words, he was the leader of the anti-Catholic fight in Czecho-Slovakia. Again it is evident that the Beneš socialists thrive on frauds, deceits and intrigue. Referring to the trend in the "Tribuna," General Prchala says:

"By means of this trick, however, the Tribuna is endeavoring to realize a much greater fraud. It is trying to evoke in the high Roman Catholic Hierarchy a favorable impression for itself and its own political ends. This time, however, uninformed readers and the 'Czechoslovak' exiles in general are supposed to be inspired to 'build a bridge' to Rome. It will not surprise me if this is being done by attempting a fraudulent explanation of Masaryk's thesis, because every one knows that the people in the 'Council of Free Czecho-Slovakia' are not interested in principles, but only in tactics, altogether according to the recipe of old Machiavelli and his modern admirers."

We are inclined to believe General Prchala. Enough damage and suffering has been inflicted by the followers of Beneš and his ruinous policy of "Czechoslovakism" and pro-Sovietism on the Czech and Slovak nations, nay, on the

whole of the European continent. The former Czech National Socialists — all members of the Communist-dominated "National Front" government of Beneš and Gottwald — should not be trusted, but relegated to the political rubbish heap. Today their leaders (Zenkl, Ripka) are discredited and disowned by the Czechs at home and abroad and represent no one but themselves and their mercenary clique. The same may be said for the "window-dressing" Slovak renegades in the service and pay of the Beneš Czechs (Lettrich, Slávik, Osuský, Kočvara), who speak for and represent only themselves and not the Slovak nation. Under the leadership of Dr Edward Beneš they built the "bridge" between the East and the West, over which came Stalin's hordes into Central Europe. They must not be given the chance to build such "bridges" to Rome, or between the USA and Moscow.

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**WHO SAID IT?** — "The story of the gradual adoption by the Allies of the (Czechoslovak) theses of Masaryk and his group cannot and need not be retold here. By patient and indefatigable propaganda they implanted their major postulates — the existence of a 'Czecho-Slovak nation' and the desire of the Slovak branch of it to form a part of a Czechoslovak State — so firmly in the minds of the Allies that they were never seriously questioned at the Peace Conference. The 'Czecho-Slovak' Government had been recognized by all the Principal Allied and Associated Powers even BEFORE the peace negotiations began — an act which implied that the Slovak question was in principle already settled — while when the moment arrived for settling all questions of detail, including the drafting of a frontier, it found the Czecho-Slovak Government firmly established as a negotiating party; indeed, in something like a privileged position." — (C. A. Macartney: HUNGARY AND HER SUCCESSORS, London, 1937, page 98).

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**WHO SAID IT?** — "If a single dynasty had united both peoples (Czechs and Slovaks) in a permanent, or at least an enduring union, a Czechoslovak nationality would assuredly have been formed and with it a Czechoslovak language — any minor dialectal differences which existed would have been smoothed out. This did not happen; and while the Slavs of Bohemia developed the Czech nationality and language, to which the intermediate dialects of Moravia gravitated, the Slovaks, under Hungarian rule, not only developed along different lines from the Czechs, but were not even able to form a single literary language with them." — (C. A. Macartney: HUNGARY AND HER SUCCESSORS — London, 1937).



## INTERVIEW

### Sir Robert Bruce Lockhardt and the Slovak Aviators

(Broadcast by the B.B.C. May 8 at 7 p. m. EST and May 9 at 2:45 p. m. EST. Released on May 8, 1953, 7 p. m. EST.)

The three Slovak aviators, Lieutenant Krman, Sergeant Fleischhacker and Sergeant Molnár, who flew, March 13, 1953, from Piešťany into the British zone in Austria, are now in London. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhardt had an interview with them there which was broadcast by the B.B.C. into Czecho-Slovakia. Sir Robert Bruce Lockhardt, former diplomat in Prague, spoke in Czech while the three aviators answered in Slovak.

**Sir Robert:** Tell me, please, the reason for your courageous escape from Czecho-Slovakia? Have you fled because of political or economic motives, or because of both?

**Krman:** We fled Czecho-Slovakia because of political and economic reasons. Our political convictions have never been along Communist lines and our sympathies went to the Western Allies. To remain in Communist Czecho-Slovakia when we had the possibility of flying abroad would have been equal to giving up living. Any activity against the Communist regime at the present time being impossible, there is now but one opportunity to work for our people and this opportunity lies outside of the Iron Curtain. For these reasons we had no perspective in Czecho-Slovakia. Our officers reproached us many times on account of our political indifference. Furthermore, conditions in all branches of life were terrible, impossible to imagine for people in the Western World.

**Sir Robert:** What difference did you observe after your escape between the life in Czecho-Slovakia and that in Western Europe? For instance, what do people on the streets look like or what kind of articles are being sold in the stores?

**Fleischhacker:** After my escape I was surprised to see how many things people were able to buy for a small amount of money. For example, I had to spend my two month's salary to get a decent suit, while here a worker can

buy a suit with one week of work. Freedom of speech impressed me deeply and I was immensely surprised to see in a London park a crowd which any one, who desired to do so, could address on a subject of his free choice. I was most impressed by the faces of the persons — with whom I am not yet able to speak — which reflected satisfaction and poise. Every one is well dressed and everybody behaves nicely with one another. Motorists are very courteous to pedestrians, and waiting for the buses — in so orderly a manner without even one pushing — seems to me almost unbelievable.

**Sir Robert:** How strong is the anti-communist feeling in Czecho-Slovakia? Could you tell me, what is, in your estimation, the percentage of the population which adheres to Communism?

**Molnár:** What the conditions are in this respect in Czechia, I do not know. As for Slovakia, the anti-Communist attitude of the population extends all over the country. Resistance against the regime is very strong. Every person who follows with open eyes the activities of the regime is, as a matter of principle, against it. Expressed in percentage, the situation looks like this: eighty per cent of the Slovaks are not members of the Communist Party, neither are they adherents of Communism. The overwhelming majority of them are against Communism with their whole hearts and souls. Twenty per cent are Communists, but even half of these are only because they want to keep their jobs or get better ones.

**Sir Robert:** Do you mean that the Communist regime is more hated now than it was in 1948?

**Krman:** I know that in Slovakia resistance to Communism is of an older date. After the First World War, our fathers tasted of Communism during the struggle against the Bolshevism of Bela Kuhn in Hungary. So, the oldest generation have informed us very well about this danger. During the life of the Slovak State, when Slovak soldiers fought against Communism on Soviet territory, they had the opportunity to experience first hand what Communism is. There-

fore, I am convinced that in Slovakia there was from the beginning of the Communist domination greater and more decisive opposition against the regime than in Czechia. The Red Army, at the time of "liberation" of our country, only confirmed what our soldiers saw in Soviet Russia.

**Sir Robert:** What is the attitude of the non-Communist population toward former political parties and refugees?

**Molnár:** The non-Communist population of Slovakia condemns these parties and their leading personalities who fled to the Western countries. The reason for this attitude is that in spite of the fact that they have had a greater percentage of people on their side, they were unable to check the expansion of the Communist regime and to prevent its taking over of the whole Government.

**Sir Robert:** Is the anti-Communist attitude stronger among those who are under 30 years of age or among the older ones?

**Fleischhacker:** The anti-Communist feeling is stronger among people more than 30 years old, because, since the end of the Second World War, the youth is educated in the Communist spirit in the schools, in the factories, in the military service. There are many young men of 25 who fall for Communist promises. The majority of men of 30, however, still remembers well the times of liberty, the times when food and clothes were not rationed and when there was a great possibility for everybody to get a job.

**Sir Robert:** Do the Czechs and Slovaks still remember the great men like T. G. Masaryk, Milan Štefánik, Edward Beneš, Ján Masaryk, and Archbishop Beran? Are these personalities known by the young generation?

**Krman:** The young people know very little of these men, because the Communist regime — without any consideration for their merits — is presenting them in a very bad light. Nevertheless, Milan Rastislav Štefánik enjoyed the fame of a national saint in Slovakia. Lately, however, the Communists in our country try to destroy everything which draws the attention of our people to his memory.

In Bohemia and Moravia the names of T. G. Masaryk, Edward Beneš and Archbishop Beran are still quite popular, but not in Slovakia, where the names of Hlinka, Tiso, Štefánik prevail.

**Sir Robert:** How do the anti-Communist Czecho-Slovaks imagine the liberation of Czecho-Slovakia and the future of their State in a liberated Europe?

**Molnár:** The majority of the anti-Communist Slovaks is for a Central-European federation of peoples, in which every nation will decide its own affairs and where every member will have equality of rights with other partners. But the main task is to be seen in the common decision of all these peoples — Czechs, Slovaks, Magyars and others — to destroy the Communist tyranny. — (Slovak League Press Bureau by permission of the BBC, London, and the interviewed).

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#### WHO SAID IT?

"I fully understand the reasons which led France and Great Britain to demand that we should not fight in September 1938 . . . . In that year, I think the only countries in Europe prepared for the war were GERMANY, THE SOVIET UNION AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA. I had no doubts whatever about Czechoslovak preparedness. Our resources were great and they were fully mobilized. From 1933, when Hitler took the whole power in Germany into his hands, I WAS SURE that Europe was moving rapidly towards a great and terrible crisis . . . . In 1938 in September we had ONE MILLION AND A HALF splendidly equipped soldiers. They were at the disposal of the struggle for democracy and freedom together with all our powerful industries. The events in 1938 prevented it. Nazi Germany disbanded and destroyed this splendid army. Only a very small part of it succeeded in reaching the Allied countries." — Dr. Beneš, Speech, New York, May 26, 1943).

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"Czecho-Slovakia and Germany were the only two countries in Europe, which, in the September 1938 crisis, were TOTALLY PREPARED FOR WAR. As for us, our resources were mobilized to the highest degree. And these resources were very great! . . . Had not PRAGUE adopted during the September crisis a passive attitude, Hitler would have unleashed the war then . . . . WE, therefore, under irresistible pressure submitted to the decision which had been made. I RESIGNED THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT, made preparations in the country for a struggle against Nazism in the event of war, and went into exile. The whole nation very soon understood." — Dr. Edward Beneš, Central European Observer, 1-17-41).

## OUR BLUNDERING CZECHO-SLOVAKIA POLICY

By Kurt Glaser

"Dealing with his Moscow journey, Dr. Benes said it could be regarded in the future as the logical culmination of an ancient policy." — News Flashes from Czechoslovakia, Chicago, February 21, 1944.

"He who rules Bohemia rules Europe" is an old saying. In this vital area, American policy has been built around a myth, spread by a public-relations program for which the Czecho-Slovak Government spent millions of dollars from 1918 to 1938. To understand what this myth has done to American interests, we must study the true story of Czecho-Slovakia, the story which the Administration has never told us.

When founded in 1918 by Masaryk and Benes, who gained support for the idea at home only after they had sold it to the Allies, Czecho-Slovakia had six different nationalities. As of the end of World War II, there were six and one-half million Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia, and three and one-half million Sudeten Germans, mostly in a crescent north, west and southwest of the Czech core, but with large German colonies in Prague, Bruenn and other centers. The Teschen district, predominantly Polish, had been ceded to Poland in 1938. Slovakia, to the east, had more than three million Slovaks, 700,000 Hungarians and some Germans. The extreme eastern province was Ruthenia, with a population of about 700,000, ceded to the U.S.S.R. in 1945.

The Slovaks were induced to join with the Czechs by the so-called "Pittsburgh Agreement" which promised them absolute equality: Czecho-Slovakia would be "like Switzerland," as Benes put it. The Sudetens wanted to stay with Austria, but they were not asked, and Czech troops overthrew their elected provincial government in March 1919. Masaryk and Benes did not keep their promise of equal rights. Instead, they set up a centralized government in Prague, gave preference to Czechs in the civil service, in business and in finance, undertook to "Czechify" the edu-



cational system and refused to allow Slovak autonomy. Although the Sudeten region furnished the bulk of Czecho-Slovak exports, Prague economic policies kept the area in a state of perpetual depression. It was inevitable that Slovaks, Sudetens and Hungarians should become increasingly anxious to "get out from under". All this time Czech professors and journalists in America, and Americans paid by them (Hitler had a list compiled from Czechs archives) were telling the wonders of "Czechoslovak" democracy.

The original aim of Henlein's Sudeten-German Party was simply to gain equal rights for the Sudetens within Czecho-Slovakia. Only after 1935, when the Party won a majority in the German-speaking area, offered to cooperate with Benes and was rebuffed, did pro-Nazi elements become dominant. When the Czech-Sudeten crisis became acute in 1938, the British Government sent Lord Runciman to mediate. The refusal of Benes to make timely concessions led Lord Runciman to recommend cession of the Sudeten areas to Germany.

Slovak pressure during and after the Munich crisis forced the Prague Government to grant autonomy to Slovakia on October 6, 1938. In March 1939, however, the Czech President Hacha deposed Slovak Prime Minister Tiso, occupied Bratislava with Czech troops and installed a new Slovak Government. This intervention was used by Hitler as an excuse for marching into Prague, an action which the Slovaks neither requested or suggested.

It is true that Hitler seizure of Bohemia made possible the establishment of the Slovak Republic. But this did not make it a Nazi state any more than German aid to Finland nazified that country. The Slovak Republic was what the Slovak people wanted, and it was recognized by 27 countries, including Great Britain, France and even the Soviet Union. In spite of intense Nazi pressure, President Tiso and the Slovak Government did their best to protect the Jews of Slovakia until 1944, when a "rebellion" organized by Communist parachutists led Hitler to install a reign of terror. Slovakia declared war on the Soviet Union in 1941, but it was never at war with the United States. Slovaks

repeatedly protected American airmen forced down over their country.

Although President Benes, who had resigned after the Munich Agreement in 1938, had recognized his successor Hacha, he decided after the dismemberment of Czecho-Slovakia in 1939 to work toward a political come-back. He and his followers formed the Czechoslovakian Liberation Movement in Paris in 1939, and moved it to London in 1940, later securing Allied recognition as the "Czechoslovak Democratic Government." It was necessary to face the fact that the Czech population at home was not particularly anti-German. Of all the territories under Nazi control, the Czech Protectorate had the highest standard of living. Official rations were the same as in Germany, and since they were actually distributed (which was not always the case in the Reich) the Czechs actually had more to eat than the Germans. Czech industry gave active support to the German war effort, and large numbers of Czechs volunteered for the German Army. As Kenneth de Courcey (Review of World Affairs, April 28, 1944) pointed out, there was "almost no resistance movement at all" so that it was necessary to parachute in territories to assassinate the Nazi Commissioner Heydrich and provoke the Lidice atrocity with which Hitler was stupid enough to oblige. Since Benes and his followers were determined to pursue their policy of Czech ultra-nationalism, it was evident that they could not count on Czech support at home, let alone the allegiance of the Slovaks. The anti-Nazi Sudeten Germans were willing to reach a settlement, but Benes decided instead to expel them from Czecho-Slovakia. This policy could only be executed with outside assistance, and the only government which could give effective support was that of the Soviet Union. The "Czechoslovakist" policy of Benes and his followers was, therefore, bound to make their government **permanently dependent on Russia**. The blunder of American policy is that we supported Soviet policy, recognized the Benes "Government" and even now (December 1952) accept those of Benes' followers who broke with Gottwald in 1948 as "democratic exiles" even though they have not changed their policies in the slightest.

The policy of the "Czechoslovak Democratic Government," which supplied the "non-Communist" politicians in the "National Front" which governed Czecho-Slovakia from 1945 to 1948 and whose members are now mostly in the United States under State Department protection, was that of absolute adherence to the Soviet Union. As Dr. Peter Zenkl, today President of the "Council of Free Czechoslovakia" with headquarters in Washington, explained to the temporary parliament in November 1945: "The nationally conscious Czechs and Slovaks have no doubt that in their own interest, as well as in international interests, permanent collaboration with the USSR is necessary. Never without the USSR, never against the USSR, always at its side!"

Hubert Ripka, who in 1939 hid the Soviet agent Simon-Katz from the French police, later became Minister of Information in the London "Government" and who is now a professor at the New School for Social Research in New York, summarizes the policy in more details in his book *East and West* (London, 1944):

"Since, in the new situation, it was impossible to collaborate officially with the Soviet Union, we... did nothing which might prejudice or prevent the renewal of co-operation at the earliest possible moment; I need only recall how strongly our attitude contrasted with that of many others during the Soviet-Finnish War. Moreover, even in that period, there was no interruption of the personal contacts and exchange of information between ourselves and important Soviet representatives in London, Paris, Washington and elsewhere."

Apparently both the British and United States Governments were willing to accept as a "Czechoslovak democratic exile" anyone with a passport from the Czech "Government-in-exile." The London "Czechoslovaks" took advantage of this fact to infiltrate a large number of Soviet agents, who were in the direct service of the Kremlin, into both the United Kingdom and the United States. The "Czech-Slovak" service of the British Broadcasting Company was taken over by Communists; others worked for the Communist party paper *Daily Worker*, the two staffs being for operating purposes interchangeable.

Douglas Hyde, a former Communist, relates in his book *I Believe* (London, 1951) a typical example of infiltration

involving one Ludwig Freund\*, a German Communist masquerading as a Czech. Freund was assigned to the Daily Worker but his salary was paid by the "Czechoslovak Democratic Government" with British funds. Hyde tells us:

"Freund achieved considerable standing with members of the Benes Government and was able to put us (the Communist Party) in touch with them at any time. He was able, also, of course, to keep us informed of most of what was going on in Czech Government circles.

"Freund in co-operation with members of our Editorial Foreign Department would write articles to which non-Communist members of his Government would willingly put their names."

\* The Ludwig Freund mentioned here is not the same person as the Chicago professor of that name.

The effectiveness of this arrangement is suggested by Minister Ripka's speech of November 7, 1942, over the British Broadcasting Company, in which he said:

"...the Russian November Revolution not only increased the strength of the Russian Soviet State, it also raised to greater heights than ever before the standard of civilization, culture and living of the wide masses of the Soviet peoples..."

"Bolshevism is a super-national ideal, an eternal ideal, a human ideal, an ideal which has kindled the minds of the noblest of men from the time of Plato and through the Christian era, through the French Revolution and until today... Just as the French Revolution strove to realize the ideal of freedom, so did the Russian Revolution try to realize the ideal of equality."

The "non-Communist" politicians in London, whom the State Department has since 1948 undertaken to palm off on the American public as anti-Communists, planned with Stalin during the war to destroy the Slovak Republic and to expel the German-speaking minority. The price exacted by the Kremlin was the complete Sovietization of Czechoslovakia, **which became a Communist satellite in 1945, not in 1948.** To assure that the sell-out would work, the "non-Communists" agreed with the Kremlin to allow only those political parties which would join a United Front under Communist domination, a procedure which General Eisenhower rejected for the U. S. Zone of Germany as undemocratic (New York Times, October 17, 1945). Other parties were prohibited and their leaders thrown into concentration camps. The true policies of the "non-Communist" Czechoslovak politicians can best be shown by their public statements made between 1945 and 1948.

"Our alliance with the Soviet Union is the main pillar of our foreign policy (applause)... Our alliance with the Soviet Union guarantees us immediate help of Soviet armies in case of emergency." — Dr. Ivo Duchacek, President of the Foreign Committee of the National Assembly, speech of March 8, 1946.

"Let us declare war against fear of bolshevism and forbid, at the same time, the formation of any anti-Communist front whatever." — *Právo lidu*, organ of Social Democratic Party.

"Centrifugal forces shall be jailed... Centrifugal forces are today eradicated and liquidated." — Dr. Jozef Lettrich, writing in *Čas*, Bratislava, No. 130, 1946.

**Question:** "Why does no opposition party exist in Czecho-Slovakia?"

**Answer:** "The need for an opposition party in reality has not yet arisen in our country." — Pavel Viboch at press conference in England, May 1947.

"Never in history was Russia so mighty, never were the forces of socialism so colossally forged together. This is a new historical epoch. Nevertheless some people think in a stick-in-the-mud fashion. It has not yet been possible to convince everyone of the necessity of the overthrow of capitalism..." — Ferdinand Peroutka, *Tak nebo tak* ("So or so"), Prague, 1947, p. 8.

"In Czech politics, in Czech national life, it is urgent that we come to an understanding with the Communist Party... The Communist Party shall remain the greatest force in our political scheme even after the elections are over; and socialism shall remain the foundation of our national life... Coming to terms with the Communists is the golden theme of our political philosophy." — Ferdinand Peroutka, writing in *Dnešek*, Prague, February 9, 1948.

Together with Communist "partisans," the "non-Communist" politicians of the National Front supervised the wholesale murder of more than 300,000 innocent people. They voted unanimously the Communist-drafted Kosice Program which wiped out private business, they set up a system of "People's Courts" on the Soviet model and in Slovakia they established forced labor camps, to which confinement could be imposed **without trial** for persons "who profess an ideology inimical to the State". And then one day Stalin and Gottwald decided they needed their "liberal allies no longer — **because the Sovietization of Czecho-Slovakia had been completed.**

After the so-called "Gottwald Putsch" of 1948, the leading Communist collaborators and fellow-travellers — including all those quoted above — came to the United States.



The State Department received them as "democratic exiles" and set them up in the research business, partly with taxpayers' money. Mr. Duchacek, who once claimed credit for helping to negotiate the Czech-Soviet Treaty of 1943, was employed by the Voice of America. Ferdinand Peroutka, who had written as late as December 1947 that it would be "unthinkable" to take the side of the United States in a war with the Soviet Union, was placed in charge of the "Czechoslovak" operations of Radio Free Europe, financed by the Crusade for Freedom. Two of his principal assistants were Pavel Tigrid and Joseph Kodicek, both former members of the BBC's Communist-dominated "Czech-Slovak" staff. Tigrid was a member of the Communist Party until 1945, when he joined the "Catholic" Party headed by the "Red Monsignor" Sramek under circumstances which are to say the least equivocal. All the other Czecho-Slovak politicians favored by the State Department (up to December 1952) meet the same standard of (pro-Soviet) loyalty.

The "Council for Free Czechoslovakia," headed by Peter Zenkl, boasted in a pamphlet (*In Search of Havens*, Washington, 1950) that the State Department takes its advice on which Czech and Slovak refugees to admit to the United States and which to exclude. It is well known in Europe — even though American newspapers maintaining correspondents in Germany have for some reason never seen fit to publish the facts — that pro-Communists and left-wing socialists get preference for immigration, whereas known anti-Communists are put on a blacklist. The attitude of those favored by the Council is illustrated by the farewell speech of one Rostislav Foukal, who before leaving for America told his comrades in Germany: "Every democratic-thinking person must recognize that the present economic system in America is rotten to the core, the workers are exploited by their employers and stifled by Taft and Company... We Czechoslovakian socialists... will help America to escape from the claws of the capitalists... We will help the Americans to reshape their history!"

As for Slovakia, the overwhelming majority of the nation was and remains today firmly anti-Communist. The

Slovaks hoped fervently that the end of World War II would not destroy their Republic, but would bring them liberation so that they could govern themselves without German, Russian or Czech interference. But the "Czechoslovak" Government in London had already made its deal with the Kremlin, a deal explicitly sanctioned by an American Administration. The Slovak Republic was liquidated. In spite of asylum granted to the Slovak Cabinet by General Walton H. Walker at Kremsmuenster, Austria, the State Department ordered the surrender of Father Tiso and his government to the "Czechoslovak War Crimes Commission" without even the formality of an extradition hearing. The kangaroo trial of Father Tiso — conducted before a judge who had sworn in advance "I will hang Tiso!" — is a classic case of judicial murder.

After the Slovak Republic had been wantonly destroyed by the Red Armies by pre-arrangement between the Kremlin and the "Czechoslovak Democratic Government," the Communist-dominated government of Dr. Benes mobilized "people's courts" on the Soviet model for a drive against patriotic Slovaks. The Catholic Bishops John Vojtaššák and Michael Buzalka were incarcerated, church institutions were nationalized and private and corporate property was confiscated arbitrarily. Up to 1948, during a period when Ambassador Steinhardt assured the American public that "there is definitely no iron curtain in Czechoslovakia" (New York Times, February 1, 1947), over 100,000 Slovaks were jailed, about 30,000 deported to Russia and over a hundred executed.

Slovakia was placed under the joint rule of the Communist Party and the so-called "Slovak Democratic Party" headed by Dr. Joseph Lettrich, now a member of the "Council of Free Czechoslovakia." The "Democratic Party" was created arbitrarily to provide an ostensibly "non-Communist" partner for the Bolsheviks, since the Slovak parties with popular support refused to cooperate with the Communists and were therefore liquidated. Government positions were divided by the two parties on a 50-50 basis. In the May 1946 elections the Democratic Party (for which

non-Communists felt constrained to vote, fault de mieux) received 62 per cent of the votes, two minor parties 8 per cent and the Communist Party 30 per cent. The Communists continued, however, to enjoy key positions in the provincial government of Slovakia out of all proportion to their actual strength. Their collaborators and supporters, such as Messrs. Lettrich, Kvetko, Viboch, Slávik, Kočvara and Ferjenčík, are all in the United States, where they pose as "anti-Communist democratic exiles" from Czecho-Slovakia.

The tensions created by the brutal expropriation of the Sudeten Germans and by the rape of Slovakia are factors which perpetuate the Soviet Russian stranglehold on Czecho-Slovakia. It is the aim of the "Czechoslovak" politicians in the United States to return to power with American assistance. But if they succeed, they will again be dependent on Russian support, since the majority of citizens of Czecho-Slovakia (including vast numbers of Czechs who object to socialism and were revolted by the atrocities and the police terror) are strongly opposed to them. As long as the United States Government maintains its unholy alliance with this group, it will never be able to pursue a firm or consistent anti-Communist policy in Central Europe. — (Reprinted by permission from the author's "**The Iron Curtain and American Policy**," Public Affairs Press, 2153 Florida Avenue, Washington 8, D. C.)



#### WHO SAID IT?

"**THE SLOVAK PEOPLE** is one of the great Christian nations of central Europe. History tells us that the forefathers of the Slovaks inhabited their present territory since about the fifth century. The Slovaks are a plain, humorous, intelligent, song-loving, industrious and religious people, devoted to the peaceful development of their national life and their national culture. They did not seek domination over other peoples, but only sought to safeguard their own national existence. No other nation of Europe suffered longer under alien domination than the Slovaks. The recognition and respect of their inherent right to free development and political independence will be a cornerstone of peace and cooperation among nations. It is necessary and right for Americans, including Americans of Slovak descent who wish all nations of the earth as much freedom and independence as they themselves enjoy in our blessed Country, to show at least an equal amount of love and sympathy for the Slovak people in its long struggle for freedom and independence." — (P. A. Hrobak, Milwaukee, Wis., 10-28-51)

## THE PRACTICAL ASPECT OF A FEDERATION

Joseph Pauco, Ph. D.

### I

Eastern Europe provides a political observer with a motley mosaic of opinions. Living here are many nations and races which even a Central European does not properly recognize and many times does not know whether to classify them with European nations or with the Asiatics. Whoever searches more profoundly into their history and studies their political struggles at least cursorily will notice that in many regards their history and their programs are very similar to those of every nation in Central or Western Europe. You will find smaller and larger groups; small nations bound to the destiny of great ones, and their mutual relationship is manifested nearly always by the same complaints as those of other nations—suppression, imperialism, wars, revolutions, heroic deeds of national leaders, etc.

In general, it is said that the East-European nations are politically less developed. Enemies of their freedom say that they are the more primitive nations and, therefore, certain slogans and principles of program are more highly spirited and sometimes sound like a voice from the romantic times of the past century. One thing is certain, that generally in almost all East-European nations, as can be seen from the course of their emigration, there is a great deal of conservatism both with regard to the form of warfare as well as the peaceful arrangement of Eastern Europe, or the territory of Asia Minor.

Usually in all ideological proclamations, which are designated not only for the limited domestic public, but also for foreign countries, the stereotyped assertion is re-iterated that it is imperative to build national states in the whole of Eastern Europe. They promote not only the disintegration of Soviet Russia, but also oppose every form of a greater Russian empire. And systematically they oppose the much used Russian thesis about several Russian nations, incidentally, the false naming of some non-Russian nations (Little Russia, correctly the Ukrainia, etc.).

Taken objectively, these nations must be fully understood. Not only small nations, that is tribes (as for example, of the Upper Caucasus), but also large nations (forty million Ukrainian and eighteen million Byelorussian people) did not have their own state for long centuries. Then in this conglomeration of East-European nations there also are such that cannot at all claim that they are building upon their own state traditions. And we may go even farther. Not until the twentieth century did small tribes or groups begin to create individual units which claimed national rights as nations with all the attributes of culturally and politically mature nations to manage their own destiny (Upper Caucasus). It was, for example, quite unknown to Europeans and less so to Americans that the Cossacks declared themselves an independent nation. History discloses that the Cossacks were in the service of Russian Czars and one part of them was inclined towards the Ukrainians; their language is Russian and Ukrainian. But we were acquainted only with legendary Cossack heroes. We knew very little about their political endeavors. But now there exists a strong movement for a Cossackia, i. e. an independent Cossack state.

Besides all this, many of the East-European nations experienced a transfer process, especially during the Soviet reign of terror. The Čečeni (Tchetchene) of the Upper Caucasus are no longer in their original place. They were spread over the entire Soviet Union simply because they were a healthy and belligerent nation. A similar fate befell the small (two hundred thousands) Kalmuck nation and many other small nations. Transfer or resettling of nations is the best tactic of the Soviet. Already a whole million inhabitants of the Baltic states has been forcefully transferred to the Soviet interior and to Siberia; Russians, Tartars, Uzbeks, and many others have supplanted them. It is no wonder then that all the nations of Eastern Europe and Asia Minor nations from an instinct of self-preservation insist on national independent states. Naturally, these tendencies manifest themselves most acutely within the strong nations, as for example, the Ukrainians. The Ukrainian



emigration is divided into at least ten political parties: from the most extreme rightists to socialists. But there is hardly one Ukrainian factor in emigration who does not favor an independent Great Ukraina.

Many times it appears that it is impossible to speak with East-European representatives about any other type of political organization other than national states. Fear of the entire future arrangement is often responsible for this.

But all things considered, there is no fundamental aversion toward federalistic endeavors. True, the East-European is little interested in a West-European federation, because he is convinced that Western Europe has an insignificant interest in the correct solution of the Eastern question. But, inadvertently, all thoughts and manifestations, which come to light in connection with either a West-European or a federation involving the whole of Europe, affect also the spiritual stratum of East-European emigration. And so, in their club meetings and their reviews, periodicals, and newspapers, they often discuss this most recent political problem seriously and minutely. This is not merely a confirmation of what has already been done in this matter, but learned East-European professors, politicians and publicists have the courage to draw a parallel between the West and East, between the intellectual efforts for a federation in the West and the practical possibilities in the East. Few are those who will analyze all the problems publicly. However, we have found many instances of debates concerning a European and a regional Central-European and East-European-Asia Minor federation. And it was not always a voice from the East which took a negative stand to the conception of a federation itself. Finally, even exclusive, nationalistic, international emigrant organizations allow for a closer or liberal relationship of individual nations. Such an International of Freedom, consisting of twenty one Central and East-European emigrations, bases its fundamental program on an inter-continental confederation of states, including all of Eastern Europe, except Russia and all of Asia Minor. The Anti-Bolshevik Block of nations, building exclusively on national states, has within its Constitution a clause which

speaks of the possibility of creating smaller or larger units and co-states. The oldest East-European anti-bolshevik international emigrant organization, Prometheus, working already twenty eight years, receives most sympathetically the trends which favor a European federation and a regional federation.

Therefore, the idea of federalism is not foreign to the East-European peoples, nor to those who never had their own state and who yearn to be free. In comparing these efforts from the East, undoubtedly the thought arises with regard to Central Europe where the Slovaks dwell. What is the situation there?

## II

One argument against Slovak persistence and perseverance in the struggle for an independent state usually is its national "youthfulness". This argument was used especially during the years following World War I, when the struggle of the Slovaks began to be serious both in form and intensivity, and opponents of Slovak freedom had to resort to all kinds of, and many times, less successful arguments. This argument could have been valid to a certain extent only until Slovak intellectuals refuted the false legend that the Slovak nation has no history and until the Slovaks themselves proved by their creative spirit that their nation can adapt itself in any period to its neighbors in all fields and that its cultural endeavors are not more inferior, but in many respects the Slovak genius surpasses its partners and becomes distinctly original.

Therefore, such an argument could not carry weight for very long. It lost in realism very quickly with the Slovak people, and it was the spirit of the Slovaks that proved it is possible to create a new Slovak environment in the spiritual and national-political regard without lures and snares, without thorough saturation from secondary sources. The "youthful" Slovak nation had chosen its own course so that it could live its own national life.

Against facts, and particularly the vitality of all the component parts of the Slovak nation, it was difficult to

keep on using endlessly the arguments used during the first few years following World War I. Quickly, therefore, as the views of the Slovak people began to change, and as the course of the policy of "lures" was changed by facts, the very same people suddenly ascertained that the Slovak nation is biologically so strong that its neighbors will have to draw from this healthy blood bank to preserve themselves, to revive, and also become stronger. This was an immoral attempt to destroy the national Slovak body. After drawing upon the biological vitality, a degeneration of spiritual values among the Slovak nation would be inevitable. It was not possible, therefore, from motives of self-preservation, to agree with such "allurements."

From this theory our Czech neighbors moved further. Not only biologically were we supposed to save one of our neighbors, but we were also supposed to contribute to its cultural and religious revival. These voices were heard frequently after World War II.

All this is defective and for the Slovaks extremely dangerous. Surely, to save, let us say, a nation twice as large, from certain ruin, is a beautiful and historically valuable sacrifice. But nothing more or less than a sacrifice. Probably, our investments would be faulty and all our magnanimity could once avenge itself on our nation. By our own efforts we would be perhaps the cause of new dramas in the years to come, similar to the various struggles of the past. On the surface, it would be a sublime act, but in reality the murder of our own nation. We would in fact be guilty of perpetrating national suicide.

We admit that we feel sorry for the decline and demise of any nation and its culture. Higher motives and self-love prevent us from pouring into the disintegrating body of our neighbor — even if he asks us to do so — all that God has given us as a manifestation of our own strength and cultural development.

We realize that our development was hampered, that we are just beginning to live, that the culmination of our life is yet to come. Because of this motive — that we would not collapse before we present evidence of our spiritual and

national-political heroism to the world — there is for us no enticement which would lead us from the path of our very own interests.

True, this is not an egotistic and selfish course. We have the highest interest in this only because we do not want to fall and perish under the guise of such dangerous and, frequently, even enticing allurements. On the other hand, we are fully convinced that in a more extensive Central and All-European society we will be able to do more even from the spiritual and material viewpoints. Binding ourselves exclusively to the interests of just one neighbor would mean our gradual extinction and destruction. Even if we were the center of attraction for a definite time, this would be a very narrow circle and our rapid exhaustion would soon turn away the attention of all friends. Nevertheless, natural development can be assured to us only in a healthy competition in a normal advancement which is not weighed down with too great a burden. An alliance, let us say, with the Czechs — an alliance of complete biological and spiritual growing-together — would stifle within us all manifestations of individuality exclusively for the benefit of the larger Czech nation.

We are for co-operation, but we wish to put it on a real foundation of as extensive a co-operation as possible. If it is true that we are still a "youthful" nation, immature, but full of life and having all the prerequisites for the restoration of biological and cultural life of a certain nation, then the realistic hypothesis is more valid, that is, that all the energy which we should invest in behalf of one of our neighbors, in time will uphold the Slovak nation much longer as an individual factor within the Central European family of nations, healthy and capable of its own undertakings. The healthy Slovak nation, being fully willing to accept the closest co-operation within the framework of an European federation, wants to be equal with its political and cultural sense to the most serious factors of world political planning.

The health and resources in which the Slovak nation abounds — and in this respect it has many preferences

over some European nations — assures it of all suppositions, that it will know how to maintain itself in the European family of states. And, of course, everything it produces with its intellect and hands above the average and above its living standards, it will gladly let its partners have. There is a great difference whether the healthy and elementally powerful expressions of the Slovaks, about which many do not doubt, should benefit one of our neighbors exclusively, or whether we should share them with the whole of Europe. Definitely, we shall choose the latter course. It is direct, logical and free of allurements.

We do not fear a contest, competition, or spiritual rivalry. Our healthy construction, which others envy, certainly will overcome all remnants of prejudice and, above all, will convince all the other European partners that they can count on the Slovak nation in every field of endeavor that this nation is aware of its duty not only to itself, but also to others. It is not envious, or even hazardous.

### III

There is no doubt that the time will come for the creation of large state units even in the Old World. Europe already has laid the foundations of a federation which, in the eyes of theorists — the most outstanding contemporary politicians of Europe — is clear from almost every side. Only groups not interested in the welfare of Europe turn away from this idea. We Slovaks cannot but be interested even in the practical side of the matter, inasmuch as we would like to see ourselves, on the one hand, among the independent nations of Central Europe, who are waiting for the creation of a European federation, and, on the other, we do not want to stand unprepared toward all those factors, who are placing obstacles in the way of Slovakia becoming a member of such a European federation.

One of the most serious reasons why some groups oppose our direct participation in the European federation, and at best wish to see us in it only through the medium of Czecho-Slovakia, usually is an alleged extreme Slovak nationalism. Paradoxically as it sounds, this allegation



is not casual, but is used systematically as a serious argument against us. It simply does not sound natural and serious that the Slovaks come with the thought of merging Slovakia, as an independent state unit, into an European federation. Many Slovak politicians are fighting very effectively for this idea already several decades.

Dr. Milan Hodža was not an extreme Slovak nationalist, even though he went through a comparatively motley degree of political thought. This Milan Hodža dedicated all his intellect to the federalistic idea and, therefore, belongs among the most significant figures in this modern movement not only in our Slovak environment, but in relation to Central Europe as well. Even though he was a centralist in the Czecho-Slovak Republic, nevertheless, with the greater part of his spirit he belonged to the broader Central-European environment.

Other Slovak politicians also emerged and are still emerging with the idea of a federation. The President of the Slovak Republic, Dr. Joseph Tiso, did not conceal his conviction that evolution could not proceed otherwise than in the spirit of federalization. In his public utterances he made several allusions to this grave problem as if to prepare the Slovak public for a new epoch of national and state life.

Karol Sidor, former Slovak ambassador, does not deny his conception of federalism. Even the official program of the Slovak National Council Abroad, which Karol Sidor heads, is marked as a program for an independent Slovak State within a framework of an European federation.

Perhaps, the most productive theorist, in the ranks of those who comprise the Slovak National Council and are coming on the scene from the young Slovak generation to take the responsibility for the development of affairs, is Dr. Joseph Kirschbaum. Not only from the viewpoint of evolutionary necessity, but chiefly because he grasped this complex of questions sensibly and scientifically, Kirschbaum, since the end of World War II, prepared and published numerous dissertations and studies which aim to prove to the world that Slovaks have their own modern political con-

ception and also people who display an animated and unusual interest in the problem of a federalized Europe.

Similarly, other Slovak political workers, publicists and writers, teachers and intellectuals are working for a federation (Dr. Emanuel Böhm, Dr. Francis Hrušovský, Rev. Nicholas Šprinc, Dr. Joseph Mikuš, Dr. Joseph Cieker, Dr. Imrich Kružliak, Dr. Arvéd Grébert, Louis Kandra and many others).

In contemporary trends of Slovak politics the most fascinating connecting link is the idea of federation. Thinking in a practical way, it is impossible to picture a Slovak politician or political theorist who seriously deals with the idea of large units, such as a Central-European or European federation would be, and would wish to lead his nation along the path of intolerance and of nationally scourged passions.

Therefore, the Slovaks and their political and cultural representatives are not building a dam on the pointed edge of chauvinism, but adhere to the notion of a future European federation.

#### IV

It is interesting to note that it was chiefly the Czech Socialistic parties which both in Czechia and Slovakia unleashed the most savage conflict about the unity of the "Czechoslovak" language. The same parties who did not forget to pose even in our country as progressive parties, in accordance to Marxist ideology. If the Slovak nation opposed this their "progress," then it was in a large measure because they brought confusion into the fundamental concepts of political life, and, in fact, reaction which excludes all criticism. Czech socialism has shown itself as the pioneer of frustrated thinking, and if we transfer its conception to a practical field, we see that it has ridiculed itself as has no other movement which had anything to do, directly or indirectly, with the Slovak nation.

For twenty full years, Czech politics tenaciously held to "Czechoslovakism" as a sally bridge into Slovakia. Other Czech parties adopted this slogan from the socialists. Scientists seized upon it and were followed by Czech journalists.

And thus, in fact, a period ensued when representatives of Czech spirit and practical politics were more engaged in gaining a position for the artificial construction of "Czechoslovakism" than a real settlement of relationships among the minorities. Indisputably we must thank their inconsiderate, one-sided and undemocratic political program for the fact that Prague centralism found itself in ruins with the first thrust.

The so-called "Czechoslovaks" have denied the Slovaks the right to self-existence. The Slovak nation, nevertheless, persistently fought for the recognition of this most natural right. And it did so in harmony with cultural Europe, which no one, except the Communists labeled as reactionary or backward. In political morals, the struggle for the recognition of the supreme rights of a nation signifies, in the positive sense of the word, the most noble expression of progressiveness. The Slovaks, therefore, are ahead of the Czechs in this regard by thirty years.

Many experiments were necessary to reform the "Czechoslovaks" at least partially. There had to be a war — for them new experiences both on the domestic and foreign fronts. Once more they had to ascertain the mind of the Slovak nation, to scrutinize the trends of European and non-European politics, so that some of them tactically, others perhaps sincerely, would abandon the ruinous policy of "Czechoslovakism." After World War II, less was said about "Czechoslovak" unity and, particularly, about a united language. It must be mentioned again, that the most unprogressive of all in this regard were the Czech Socialists. The other Czech politicians and their Slovak allies recognized the right of the Slovak nation to its own existence.

But at that time the Slovaks were more advanced. They had gone through the historically rich segment of their own state. It is certain that there is a great deal of difference between "Czechoslovak" comprehension — it still is bound up with a joint state — and the standpoint of the Slovaks. To get ahead by means of a steady forward effort and in all forms — to find what benefits best the life and development of the nation — the Slovaks proved that they are marching

in the spirit of the times and, as an independent and competitive political unit, seek to persevere alongside the most cultured European nations.

Today, Europe is much farther along the way than the "Czechoslovaks." Theoretically and practically it is prepared for a federation of all nations. The so-called "Czechoslovaks" are at the crossroads. Some adhere to the form of the first Czecho-Slovak Republic, while others are silent and say nothing about a fourth or fifth Czecho-Slovak Republic for which they would want to fight. Still others talk obscurely about the possibility of a federated Czecho-Slovakia. There is also a fourth Czech group which does not wish to interfere in Slovak affairs and is fighting for a Central-European or European federation in which it reckons with an independent Czech unit and a separate Slovak unit.

On the other hand, contemporary Slovak politics is following clearly and unreservedly what is best for an independent Slovak State within the framework of a European federation. Comparing the efforts of the "Czechoslovaks" with those of the Slovaks, we see, that even now there is a basic difference between them and that "Czechoslovakism" appears in the role of the most reactionary factor in Central Europe.

But, willy-nilly, some of its representatives have come closer to the thinking of the Slovak nation and gradually are relinquishing their bigoted and archaic views. However, there still remains the difference of thirty years.

We can, therefore, clearly see from these simply-stated realities that the sense of Slovak politics tended toward a broader European and world society. There is a basic difference whether we get into this broader society of nations through our own doors, or whether we shall be led into it through foreign doors with those of others; whether we will look passively upon the work, or whether we shall take part in it with joint forces.

A European federation will bring an end to these mistakes. We are definitely declaring for a European association, because, according to morals, culture and political maturity, we rightfully belong in it.

## CASTLES OF SLOVAKIA

## HRIČOV

The ruins of Hričov (Hritchov) Castle in the Trenčín District are the smallest of those which stud the Váh valley. At one time it was connected with the Súľov Castle by a road which snaked its way over the ridges of mountains. The ruins of Hričov rest on a steep rock with which the remains of the walls are grown together. The ruins are almost inaccessible. The summit on which the ruins rest is one of the last spurs of the Súľov Rocks, and the castle really looks like a robber's hideout.

Hričov, it seems did not make history, though a document from 1265 mentions it and chronicles say that the castle was built by one Kiliján, the manager of the Bytča Castle. The story goes that the Lehár robber clan took it from Kiliján and held it for many years. When the widow of the last Lehár died, the castle passed on to her adopted son, Francis Thurzo. From the time of Blažej Podmanín (1496) the fate of Hričov was closely tied up with that of Bytča and the Lietava Castle.

After the death of the last Lehár, his widow remained in sorrow for three years, as it was customary in those times. Hričov was a sad and mournful place. But after three years the gates of Hričov were thrown open to receive guests. Among the hopeful callers, who expected to wed the widow of Hričov, was Francis Thurzo, the young and gallant owner of the neighboring Lietava stronghold. Thurzo had his eye on Hričov for some time and was determined to get it even if he had to marry the aging Lehár widow. The widow took a fancy to Thurzo, but told him that marriage was out of the question because of her age. But she did adopt him as her son and made him heir of her possessions. Thurzo, it seems, soon became tired of waiting for his "mother" to die, so he decided to take possession of Hričov by foul means.

One night he ordered his men to seize her and imprison her in the dungeon. The following morning Francis an-



nounced that the widow had become mentally unbalanced and had to be placed in the dungeon. But Francis Thurzo, to keep his evil deed covered up at all times, had to be on guard and that virtually made him a prisoner in the castle also. And so the years rolled on.

The legend has it that a monk approached the castle portals, made known his presence with his staff, and begged a night's lodging. Thurzo ordered the monk away. The latter turned upon Thurzo and threatened to disclose the haughty lord's crime. Thurzo flared up and set his dogs on the monk. But the monk returned and told Thurzo to do penance. Thurzo, in turn, ordered his men to seize the monk, beat him up, cast him into the dungeon and starved him to death. In the meantime fear ruled Hričov and Thurzo himself was losing his nerve. While the monk was starving, his image in stone began to grow before the castle entrance. Thurzo had the petrified monk smashed to bits, but the following morning the same petrified monk stood guard at his door. This was too much even for Thurzo. Overcome by compunction and fear, he decided to let the Lehár widow have her freedom. He set out for the dungeon with his servants — only to find the widow dead.

Thurzo became the sole owner of Hričov at last. But he did not stay for long; his servants fled one by one and, finally, even Thurzo abandoned the haunted castle. In time Hričov fell into decay. But the legend goes on to say that the petrified monk still stands witness to the crime of Francis Thurzo at the castle entrance. The Slovaks living in the vicinity of Hričov, however, say that Thurzo did not get away so easily with his crime. They claim that he actually did lose his mind and committed suicide by jumping off the castle wall into the precipice below. At night the pitiful cries and screams of the imprisoned widow could be heard by the villagers below. And Thurzo, because of his crime, even after death wandered restlessly about the vicinity of Hričov. After Thurzo's death, the rock on which Hričov was built burst into flames which ruined everything. That is the story being passed on by generations of Slovaks from Hričov.

## THREE MONTHS IN "LIBERATED" BRATISLAVA

BY: AN EYEWITNESS

Until 1944 the capital city of Slovakia, Bratislava, lived far removed from military operations. Life was altogether normal both culturally and socially. The situation changed substantially after Italy was occupied, when Bratislava came within the range of the allied air force.

Military objects of Bratislava were first bombed by the allied air force in the forenoon of June 16, 1944. The "Apollo" refinery, the adjacent factory and harbor quarters were hit. But indiscriminate Russian bombing was more fatal. Soviet fliers did not specialize on military objects, but let bombs loose anywhere in the city. They certainly did not glorify themselves with the bombing of Špitálska street, where they destroyed a church, a convent and the hospital of St. Elizabeth. Soviet planes appeared above Bratislava on Holy Saturday and peppered the civilians on the crowded streets with their deck guns. The front had moved up considerably and Soviet planes were coming over practically every hour to drop their bombs into the streets.

### Easter 1945 in Bratislava

During Holy Week it was evident to most of us that the Germans were preparing to defend Bratislava. The streets were emptied, barricades were constructed, huge guns were put up. The Germans themselves, however, did not appear to be very interested in the defense of our city and hauled whatever they could out of it. The units which remained were to be used to cover the retreating Germans. The German commander urged the Slovak Government to leave Bratislava. Since only a small number of Germans remained, it was believed that they were not going to defend the city very long. The population could not decide whether to leave the city or stay put. Saturday evening everything was being taken into cellars and hiding places. The monotonous bombing of the Russian air force, the close booming of cannons announced that the Russians were approaching steadily. Unspeakable nervousness gripped the city. All the men hid

themselves, because it was said that the Germans were going to take all the men out of Bratislava.

On Easter Sunday, at nine o'clock in the morning, Soviet fliers again made their appearance and in the afternoon huge Russian guns were bombarding Bratislava. The well-known Russian "Katuše", also called "Stalin's organs," began to play the following day, i.e., Easter Monday. Everything shook to the foundations and fires broke out in many places. The retreating Germans fired the Slovak University and all the reserve piles of food and war materials. Thick smoke rose from Bratislava for three days and three nights, and the fire spread because there were neither water nor the people to fight the fires. The heaviest fighting took place in the eastern part of the city, where practically every factory quarter was ruined, the streets of Trnava and Krížna, Štein's Brewery and the vicinity.

On Tuesday the Germans began to flee, destroying everything that had not already been destroyed. They blew up the bridge to Petržalka and the last group barricaded itself in the Bratislava Castle. The Russians already were in the suburbs of Bratislava, when the Germans in the western hills of the city began cannonading it. This hurt Bratislava the most. On Thursday morning the first Russian divisions were in the very heart of the city. Gradually the booming died away and the streets began to be filled with Russian soldiers.

### **The "Liberation" Begins**

The Soviet soldiers first liberated us from our watches with their well-known "Davaj časy" (Give your watches). Except for soldiers, the streets were empty; only corpses were being baked in the spring sun. After a few days, when we crawled out of our bunkers and cellars, we saw the ghastly picture of ruin and desolation.

Smoke still rolled out of buildings and the atmosphere was saturated with dust and gunpowder. Glass was ground under foot. Robberies were in full swing. Soviet soldiers broke windows of business places with their rifle butts and sacked and pillaged everything. A few days later, not a single shop remained whole. Whatever could not be taken

was knocked to pieces. Of course, the lawless mob helped very effectively in this work. Reports of the raping of women began coming in. It was nothing unusual to see frantic women running wildly from their attackers; they screamed, kicked and fought, but to no avail. The hordes of the Russian steppes were on the loose. Who shall describe the stark terror in the eyes of the Slovak women and girls who could not get away from the beasts of Moscow? Even if I tried, I believe that my pen would have to blush if it had to detail the brutalities and atrocities committed. There is no need to expand on the fate of many, many women, who remained lying in their blood after such a barbarian show of "affection" of the Soviet soldiers. They told us that it was the "national duty" of the Slovak women to repay the Soviet armies with love!

### Vínko, Vínko, Vínko Červené

We thought that Slovak wine would not attract the Soviets after they had tasted of strong Tokay in Hungary. But we were mistaken even this time (as usual). Slovak wine merchants did not want to sell us wine since January, because they had hoped to sell it at a high price to the Soviet soldiers. But how quickly they sobered up, when, instead of the jingle-jangle of gold rubles, they heard shots from rifles and automatics in their otherwise inaccessible cellars. Barrels were shot up and the precious liquid of the Slovak earth began flowing; first into pitchers and all sorts of containers, clean and unclean, even benzine cans. When all these were filled, the wine trickled into soldiers' boots, then flowed over the cellars and vestibules and finally onto the streets. Its strong aroma mixed with the ghastly stench of decaying corpses, which even after a week were still lying on the sidewalks of the city. The soldiers drank and so did the civilians; children drank and so did the oldsters. It seemed that the barrels were bottomless. "Vínko, vínko, vínko červené" (Wine, wine, red wine — a popular Slovak drinking song)!

I shall never forget the tovariš-comrade who had two bottles of red champagne stuck in his fur cap, a bottle in

each pocket and his hands full. He was approached by another comrade who robbed him on the street of his precious burden in broad daylight. The two lashed at each other like animals and drew blood on the hard pavement of Kapitulská street.

Bratislava wine merchants looked on stupidly and silently at this Sodomite destruction of their cellars, and the sour odor of the wine reminded them of the old times, when they were still bosses of their wine and thought that they themselves would have the honor to treat the "liberators." They realized the bitter truth that they were "liberated," i.e. completely robbed of all their worldly possessions on the very threshold of a new life, the new order promised by the men of the Kremlin.

### **Where Do You Stay, Tovariš?**

If you were in the army, you know what obedience and discipline means. Without them, there hardly could be an effective army. A soldier belongs to some particular company or division, must have his gear, be fed and quartered, even though it be under a tent or in a barn. But the Soviet soldiers who swarmed into Bratislava had no definite quarters and, hence, were everywhere. Usually about midnight it occurred to them that they had to get some sleep, so they began to look for shelter. Doors and locks and bars were no hindrance. Whether of glass or wood, doors were booted in or smashed with rifle butts, if they were not opened immediately.

"You, bourgeoisie, you did not fight..."

Threatened, there was nothing one could do but flee from his own home and consider himself lucky if he was not shot. A soldier does not undress for sleep very often at the front, but Ivan the Russian never undressed even when he had a bed, but simply piled on the bed fully garbed, boots, rifle, pistols, grenades and all. And the front was sixty miles away from us.

### **Investigation After Investigation**

We thought the war was over when the shooting subsided and the booming resounded from a distance. We began



to clean the streets, collect the dead, and put whatever was left of our homes in order. A person slowly forgets what he lost, because only then, when he did not die during the bombardment, does he realize that it is beautiful to live, even though in fear, hunger and thirst, and in rags. Things that were are no more, and other things that were not will come into being. Life is all that matters. Only he knows the real meaning of water and light who has lived through the terror of the front in hiding without light and water. Life will return to its old ways and time will heal all wounds of the soul and body of individuals and nations.

Well, why should not a person again imagine that life can be beautiful, when he is sitting on the ruins of his home and the ashes of his dreams? Why, there is no more bombing and even the streets are lighted up in the evenings.

But empty are the inns, empty are the cellars, empty are the stores and shops. Broken windows and smashed doors attest to the ruin which the Soviet soldiers had wrought. But the will to live rises above all this. We must forget everything that pained us, all the injustices, subdue our thirst for blood, when the sap of a new spring is awakening, when everything is being renovated, everything is in bloom, the thrush sings and the children play.

But all this is but a dream, an illusion. The battle has ended on the streets, but just the same a more furious invisible battle is going on. As you step out of your home, you are confronted with the bayonet of a Russian soldier or the various "safety" committees. You look around and notice that your home, nay the whole street is surrounded by guards. You return hurriedly to your room and wait to see what will happen. You wait and wait and wait until the suspense almost drives you mad. Your blood thins in your veins and you look sadly about you — and wait! Finally they come, soldiers and civilians: they go through the house and take whatever they want. They ask you whether you are a German or not, whether any Germans or "collaborationists" are in your house. You look them icily in the face. They depart but only to come again.

### Organs of Security

After two weeks of the Russian occupation everything was plundered. People had no more than they had buried or secreted in such a place where even the Russian hunters — and they are expertly schooled in the art of finding walled-in objects — would not come. There was a dearth of everything, even a serious lack of bread. But we had plenty of police! They sprang up like mushrooms after a rain. In the first place, the dreaded NKVD (OGPU), the Secret Soviet Police, notorious for its brutal and ghastly crimes. Woe to him that falls into its hands. The NKVD goes from home to home, drags people away and nobody ever hears of their fate. From eastern Slovakia alone more than 4,000 people were dragged off into Siberia.

I was fortunate to be home during the investigation. All the entrances to the building were covered by soldiers with automatics. I traversed my room nervously. Although I had a clear conscience, yet I was disquieted. (No one is sufficiently clear or safe with the Soviet Police). Finally I went into the hallway. I was greeted by a soldier and a civilian. A moment later came the captain. He asked me my name, what I was doing here, what my profession was, and whether I was a member of Hlinka's People's Party.

A machinist lived on the same floor. His room was locked. The captain ordered me to open it. "I haven't the key," I told him. The machinist had the key and the soldiers had him in hand at the gate. I ran to the gate. The NKVD guard had an automatic on the machinist. I approached him and said that the captain wants to open the machinist's room, but the machinist had the key. The latter already wanted to hand it to me, when the soldier suddenly turned the automatic on me and said: "You have the key" — "But I do not have the key, the machinist has it" — "No, you will have it, if the captain says so." — "But I do not have it; look, *tovariš*, the machinist has it." — "No, I have already told you that you will have the key and will open the door, when the captain orders you to do so."

I was dumbfounded by the profound stupidity and returned without the key. I told the captain that the *tovariš*

would not let me take the key from the machinist because, he said, the captain had ordered me and not the machinist to open the room. I also was a soldier and I know what military obedience means. But this cannot be called obedience, but some kind of unmentionable stupidity or imbecility which would be capable of sticking pins under my fingernails just to find a key on me which I do not have. I realized then why people, during the investigations in the torture chambers of the NKVD, confess to things which they never committed.

The investigation began at seven in the morning and lasted until nine. I went to town on business and returned about eleven. Upon my arrival the building was again surrounded by guards, but this time by the Partisans Security unit.

I wanted to enter the building, but they would not let me. I identified myself and said that I lived there. Finally a boy, about 17, with an automatic in his hands, let me enter. It was very lively in the hallways. The partisan captain was giving orders. I did not know what they were seeking. I went through the investigation tortures again, but quite fortunately. Again all the rooms, closets, desks, and dressing cabinets were opened. The investigation was over at about one o'clock. Again some innocent people were taken. But that was not all. That was only the beginning.

Night fell and the stars shone brightly over Bratislava. Finally, a little rest, I thought. But there is no restful or peaceful night during a Russian occupation. About midnight I was awakened by some one pounding on my door. Another investigation!

I was on my feet in an instant and opened the door. Before me in the semidarkness stood a man and a lady. Instead of identifying themselves, they opened their short coats so that I could see the revolvers in leather holsters.

"But, but, this is a special visit, and so late at night!"

"Your documents," said the man.

"Here they are, thank you."

"Were you a member of Hlinka's Party?" — "I was."

"Since when?" — "From 1933." — "Were you in the

Hlinka Guards?" — "I was not." — "Did you belong to Hlinka's Youth?" — "No." — "Are you a soldier?" — "I am an officer in the Slovak army." — "Did you take part in the revolt?" — "No." — "Why not?" — "I was on duty in Nitra." — "Are you a Slovak?" — "I am."

Then they entered my room. On my table was a small bust of Andrew Hlinka.

"And this?" — "That is a bust of Andrew Hlinka."

"Hmm, we advise you, to destroy it." — "I don't understand, why?" — "Well, maybe tomorrow you will understand."

With that they departed. At three in the morning the investigation of the secret police was completed.

At eight in the morning came the official police, the so-called "National Security" police, to find out who it was that allowed an investigation at night when the police knew nothing about it. "What kind of people were they, how did they look, what did they want?" I was asked. This then was the new order — so terribly dangerous because it had so many safety bureaus that one did not know about the other! Or did they?

### **The Bratislava Commander Complains**

A month had already passed since the occupation of Bratislava, but the streets were still unswept; dirt and rubble were everywhere; lice and infectious diseases were spreading rapidly. The local "National Committee" had a long session to decide what to do with the rubbish and rubble cluttering and burning in the streets. But how was the mess to be cleared away, when the Russians took all the city dump trucks, all private cars and all wagons and horses?

Typhoid fever spread dangerously; the numbers of inflicted increased. The Office of Propaganda, or, as it was then called, the "Commissary of Information" plastered the city with huge placards depicting a skeleton pouring lice over Bratislava and the warning: "WATCH THE LICE, THEY SPREAD TYPHOID."

People stared at the placards and barked: "But who in

tarnation brought lice here? Send the lousy Russians back to their lousy country!"

The first placards had little effect. Several days later new ones appeared: Organize energetic brigades of cleanliness! But nobody paid any attention. The rubbish burned on and spread its poisonous fumes over the population. There were no autos, no wagons with which to do the hauling.

Horses, cows and sheep were kept in the parks. The hot sun blazed away and laughingly looked at the mess, which the "new" government probably did not clear away to this day. And so the skeleton kept pouring the lice, and the placards about the brigades of cleanliness were covered with new red ones, which urged us to attend lectures on the morale of the Soviet man, Soviet woman, and the Soviet youth. The Soviet Russians wasted no time in educating the masses according to the doctrines of Marx and Lenin.

### **A Soviet Soldier Confesses**

It was a beautiful June afternoon in Karlova Ves near Bratislava, when a Russian soldier approached us and struck up a conversation. He reproved us saying that we Slovaks were undisciplined and ungrateful. We should not say or believe that the Russians are taking everything that can be hauled away, because that is only bad propaganda. Since he was in a talkative mood, and did not have a revolver, we decided to make words with him.

He spoke at length about discipline in Russia, both in thinking and in speaking. In Slovakia, he said, everyone says whatever he pleases. "That does not exist in Russia. One must hold to what Stalin says. That is the truth and all else is propaganda. Stalin told us that in Russia everything is fine and dandy, everything is beautiful, that we have enough to eat. And even though we know that everything is not fine and dandy, beautiful, and that we do not have enough to eat, yet we must say that everything is fine and dandy, and that we have plenty to eat. Stalin has so ordered! Stalin has so spoken!"

He became so excited trying to prove his impossible stand that I really pitied him. I smiled and said softly:



"My dear tovariš! We're a different kind of people, strange to you, indeed. When a thing is white, we say it is white; when it is black, we say it is black. When we have nothing to eat, we say that we are hungry or that we are starving. And if anyone orders us to speak otherwise, we still say the truth. Stalin tells you different, so be happy in your belief. We believe in God, too, but with reason, never against reason."

But our tovariš seemed to be far away; his mouth opened, but he said nothing further. Shaking his head, he pulled at his ear as he slowly walked away.

### **The Soviet Lady Doctor**

We were ordered to hand over the military hospital in Bratislava to the Russians. As we were preparing inventory lists, a Russian lady doctor stepped into the room. After talking for a time, we struck upon religion, belief in God, and other topics. But my Russian colleague, a lieutenant, proclaimed that it was in vain we were trying to convince her, because she would not believe us no matter what the arguments. I assured her that she had nothing to fear, because I had no apostolic intentions.

"Why do we write 1945," I asked her.

"I know but I won't tell you!"

"But even you designate this year by that number."

"You won't convince me"

"I do not want to. But even the unbelieving world admits that Christ was born."

"I heard about that also; but I do not believe it."

"Why?"

"Because in the history of the Communist Party there isn't anything about it."

"Ah, so!"

What is the use of debating? We looked at each other significantly, smiled, and talked about other things.

"How long did you study medicine?"

"I finished the course during the war in a year and a half. In peaceful times the study takes all of two and a half years."

We laughed loudly and pitied the patients who happened to get under her knife.

### **Placards: Religious Freedom**

During the very first weeks of occupation the Slovak Communist Party posted placards everywhere, announcing that the Communists want to respect the religious feelings of all the Slovak people and, therefore, are calling all Slovaks, regardless of their religious convictions, into the Party. Nay, even Catholic priests could and should join the party, we were told. People sing a nice tune, when they want to catch a bird!

But what if a miracle had really happened? Suppose Communism had made a turn for the better? Maybe Communism was no longer so exclusive; perhaps it was even repenting and had decided to let itself be baptized in Christian Slovakia! We knew that the Communists were not sincere, but the fact is that outwardly they did try to deal humanely with the people for a while to convince them that Communism was not as bad as they thought. It was evident that they were instructed not to insult the sacred and traditional feelings of the Slovak people. But the pretense soon wore off and the Reds openly attacked all ecclesiastical institutions.

### **Catholic Schools in Nationalized Slovakia**

If there were some Slovaks who had illusions about the Communists going soft, their illusions exploded like bubbles, when Laco Novomeský, Commissar (trustee) of Education, announced that all Catholic schools in Slovakia were to be abolished and their property was to be taken over by the State. He was led to this action, he said, because it was inadmissible that the Church should offer a different kind of education than the State. The unity of the nation, said Novomeský, required a uniform educational system, cultural and religious strife must cease, etc.

What could not be accomplished even during the first Czecho-Slovak republic, was done now with one stroke of the pen in the shadow of Russian bayonets. The Catholic institutions were hit first for obvious reasons. The Reds had

little difficulty in getting the backing of the non-Catholic Christians. All they had to do was promise them that they would get the Catholic Church properties. So-called followers of Christ attacking and despoiling the followers of Christ! The Reds knew what they were doing, but evidently the non-Catholic Christians did not, because they took the bait. Slovak Lutherans, Jews, Unitarians, Baptists, etc., expected to gain by the deal against the Catholic Slovaks (80 per cent of the population) and, therefore, went along with the Reds.

Iron must be forged while it is hot. After publishing the decree, all directors of Catholic schools were dismissed. Their places were taken over by so-called "Czechoslovaks" and Lutherans. That was done especially in gymnasiums managed by the religious orders, for example, at the Ursuline schools in Bratislava and Trnava. It was done designedly and systematically. Fists were clenched and hearts were steeled. Freedom, freedom! The Slovak Catholic public became extremely indignant. People were saying that the women of Trnava were getting ready to storm the Ursuline institution there and throw out the new directress, who was persecuting and intimidating the religious Sisters there.

### **The Bishops of Slovakia Protest**

Even though Slovaks knew that nothing would be accomplished by protests, nevertheless all Catholics were agreed that they simply could not allow the fundamental right of the Church to its own schools be taken away from them without uttering a word. The people had to make themselves heard, or else the stones would complain.

The Catholic Bishop's Council presented a memorandum to the government and the Central Catholic Chancery was organizing a signature campaign against the nationalizing of schools. Leaflets were distributed, and on July 8, 1945, the protest against the confiscation of the schools was read from all pulpits.

Well, after July 8, the Bratislava radio was heard from. It blasted and attacked the Bishop's Council, using the well-known phrase: The parish church belongs to the Church,

and the school to the State! Things came to a head and the result of the protest was that the directors of the Central Catholic Bureau, who technically organized the action, were jailed. We were again given proof that we were living in a "democracy" and that the people were deciding their own fortunes. What a mockery!

### **Catholic Bishops Imprisoned**

The first was His Excellency John Vojtaššák, bishop of Spiš. Half of Slovakia was already occupied by the Russian army. The Slovak National Council was already giving orders from Košice. At the end of April, Dr. Vavro Šrobár, chairman of the Slovak National Council at that time, came to the Spišská Kapitula (Spiš Chapter) to gain Bishop Vojtaššák for the Slovak National Council and for Dr. Edward Beneš. Šrobár wanted that prize catch, because he knew that Bishop Vojtaššák was an old and hard Slovak.

As they met in the corridor of the bishop's residence, Dr. Šrobár explained why he came and then asked the bishop to back the new government. The bishop eyed him coldly for a moment and then said:

"I do not recognize any Slovak National Council and president Beneš. My government is still in Bratislava, and as president of the Slovaks I recognize only the Slovak, Msgr. Dr. Tiso!"

The scythe struck upon a stone. Dr. Šrobár departed, and bishop John Vojtaššák went to his room. Several days later when the bishop received an order from the Slovak National Council to beget himself to his place of confinement in Štiavnik, Vojtaššák replied energetically: "I do not have an auto, nor any means of transportation, not even a horse. They took everything from me. I will yield only to force."

On May 5, 1945, an auto stopped in front of the Kapitula; it was armed with machine guns and several men with automatics. The words of Christ again rang out: You are come out as it were against a robber with clubs. The good bishop of Spiš was forcefully taken to Štiavnik and, later, to the jail of the federal court in Bratislava.

What happened to him? All I knew at that time was that the communist "Pravda" of Bratislava was inciting against him, headlining its articles thus: "The Lord Bishop is against children of the workers." It was a brazen lie, designed to undermine the trust of the faithful in the social ideology of its bishop, who during his whole life proved himself to be the most social of all episcopal dignitaries in Slovakia.

Soon after the occupation of Bratislava by the Russians, the bishop of Trnava, Military Vicar and Rector of the Bratislava seminary, J. E. Buzalka, was jailed. First he was lodged in the police station and then transferred to the federal prison where "heavy offenders" were penned. He slept on a spring, no mattress being available, and the silver-haired poet, Valentine Beniak, slept alongside him on the bare stone floor.

After the bishops, the Slovak National Council "took care" of the canons and other prelates. Among the first to be taken was Joseph Šrobár of Bratislava, brother of Dr. Vavro Šrobár. The old churchman, all heart, would never harm even a fly. But bolshevik justice did not consider that. In him it saw an "enemy of the people" and incarcerated him.

Many others followed him, among them Dr. Charles Körper, well-known among American Slovaks, former editor of a Catholic newspaper. Monsignor Marsina of Trenčín could not even eat for nothing in the jail, but had to work. And what work! He was forced to dig corpses with his bare hands from mass graves, then forced to wash and kiss each one. I have a strong suspicion that those mass graves were made by the Russians and not by the Germans as claimed by the Soviets.

### **"Fascist Pöstényi Arrested"**

That's what a headline said in the communist "Pravda."

And it stunned just about the whole of Slovakia. The discovery of America or the Law of Gravitation was no more sensational. Up to that time nobody knew that Monsignor Pöstényi was a fascist. American Slovaks know Msgr.



Pöstényi very well. He visited America in the interests of the St. Adalbert Society, publisher of Catholic literature and information, an organization equivalent to the Book of the Month Clubs in America. The Reds knew that his Slovak patriotism was beyond question and that his merits, as far as the largest cultural, Slovak, Catholic institution was concerned, were great. Monsignor Pöstényi is an exemplary priest of God, a Slovak through and through, and an indefatigable worker for the common people of his nation. He was persecuted for his Slovak patriotism when the Communist leaders and editors of the "Pravda" were still in the bosom of Abraham.

Never actively interested in politics, Msgr. Pöstényi suddenly became a "fascist!" We knew what the communists wanted to accomplish. To put Pöstényi out of the way would mean to destroy the Society of St. Adalbert with its libraries, print shops and organizational apparatus. And so the Slovak National Council appointed the financial secretary of the Society, a Czech named Wagner, as the commissary of the Society. A few days later a new management was named, one that was acceptable to the spirit and program of the Communist-dominated Slovak National Council.

This institution which was built by generations of Slovaks into a going cultural concern was wiped out in a moment by the ruthless Reds. The 150,000 members of the Society of St. Adalbert could not say a word against the action without inviting punishment, either incarceration or exile into Siberia. That is how the "people's democracy" of the Soviets operates.

### **Charitable Ecclesiastical Institutions**

The largest charitable organization in Slovakia was the Central Charity (Ústredná Karita), the central Catholic institute of all the welfare, social, and religious societies. It had its own health centers, hospitals for incurables, children's nurseries, etc. The women's "Charitas" was also a member of the organization. The Communists took over all social institutions of the Church. Some weeks after the occupation, the Communist Union of Slovak Women confis-

cated the children's nursery of the Ústredná Karita in Dornkapple, Bratislava, and the Union of Slovak Youth took over the boarding school near the forestry school in Koliba, Bratislava.

The humanitarian division of the city of Bratislava confiscated the estate of "Charitas" in Bratislava near the Red Bridge. For the women's home of "Charitas" the commissariat for Social Welfare named as commissary the Communist Fanny Hrušovský. Dr. Ivan Horváth, the commissary for social welfare, proclaimed that all the charitable, social institutions of the Church would be taken over by the state. Protests did not mean a thing, as usual.

### **"Freedom" of the Press**

One of the first acts of the Commissariat for Internal Affairs was the suppression of all newspapers. With this general order all Catholic newspapers and periodicals were wiped out automatically; not only cultural and literary periodicals, such as the "Kultúra" (Culture) and the "Obroda" (Revival), but even all the religious and educational periodicals, such as The Messenger of the Sacred Heart, The Holy Family, The Queen of May, etc. And, later the only Catholic Slovak weekly "Katolícke Noviny" (The Catholic News), which had a subscription of 170,000, was also suppressed and taken over by the Reds.

Catholics protested to the authorities, but in vain. The Catholic press was gone. Attacks against the Church and its priests increased daily, but they could not defend themselves; it was an unequal struggle. The enemy fought with powerful weapons, while the Catholics had none.

### **"Freedom" of Conscience**

The war was fought, we were told, against the suppression of conscience by imperialistic means, and we have lived to see such a dictatorship and such a barbaric violation of conscience and its internal freedom, the likes of which perhaps not even the most furious fascist ever dreamed of. On all fronts of this terrible war died the best sons of humanity for the right to speak freely about the most fundamental questions of life against the fascist terror. Men

shed their blood so that concentration camps, with all their horrors, might never again operate. But soon after the war's end all district cities in Slovakia were ordered to set up a concentration camp and jail. The war was fought for the freedom of political convictions, but in Slovakia today there are not enough jails to take care of all those, whose only guilt is that they will not swear on the Sickle and Hammer, but prefer to remain loyal to the Papal encyclicals and the fundamental principles of democracy. In a word, the Slovaks want to be democrats and not bolsheviks.

What has really changed? Every night we waited tensely to see whether they were coming for us. We had no peace during the day or night. Forever they were screening and investigating us just because we happened to live during the past era, and had to work and keep our families. They persecuted us for "collaborating" because we recorded official writings, in some office, or because we were insignificant wheels in the great machinery of life.

### In Conclusion

If I had not seen it, I would not have believed it. Those first three months in "liberated" Bratislava were a nightmare. It still haunts me. The Slovak people did not have a chance. Their country was overrun by barbarians whom the Allies had taken on as partners. Slovakia was ruled by terror and violence from the moment it was "liberated" by the so-called "United Nations," which placed it in the Soviet sphere of influence. It was ruled by the Communist-dominated regime of the man who resigned the presidency in 1938 and returned as president-avenger behind the Soviet hordes in 1945. The independent Slovak Republic, established by the duly elected representatives of the Slovak people in 1939 and recognized by 27 countries, including Great Britain and France, was wantonly destroyed against the will of the Slovak people.

The vast majority of the Slovak nation, the Catholics of Slovakia — representing 80 per cent of the population — was outlawed. No political parties, newspapers, organizations, and enterprises could exist, except those allowed by

Dr. Edward Beneš and his Communist-dominated regime. The non-Catholic minority in Slovakia — including all those who called themselves “Christians” — helped Beneš and the Communists ruin Catholic Slovakia and so helped to ruin themselves and their institutions. Whereas, in the beginning, only Catholics were persecuted and only Catholic institutions and enterprises were nationalized, later the followers of all Christian faiths were crucified and their institutions confiscated by the State. History repeated itself. But hatred of the Catholic Church in Slovakia did not solve any of the social or economic problems, but only aggravated them; in fact, it only helped the Communists realize their ends all the more speedily. It is high time that all Christians realized this and acted accordingly.

In Slovakia there shall be no real peace, no freedom, as long as it is governed by people who are hostile to the national traditions of the Slovak nation and its religious and political convictions and, hence, are bent on the destruction of the Slovak people. Slovakia, one of the oldest Christian countries of Central Europe, never should have been destroyed as an independent State. That is more evident today than it was in 1945. No nation has fought Communism more persistently and consistently than the Slovak nation. It's time that this truth was recognized by all freedom-loving, anti-Communist countries and that they adjust their policies toward the Slovaks to fit the present situation. Even today the people of Slovakia find it hard to believe that they were sold out to the men of the Kremlin with the help of the United States and Great Britain, the great symbols of freedom and democracy. But they still expect to be liberated by them.

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“THE SLOVAK LEAGUE OF AMERICA is an American institution. Its primary interest is America. As an American of Slovak descent, I say again and again that it is in the interest of America and the democratic world at large to work for the freedom and independence of Slovakia. The individuals and organizations affiliated with the Slovak League of America — as true Americans — cannot wish their brethren in Slovakia less freedom than they themselves enjoy in the U. S. A. We say: Give Slovakia back to the Slovak people!” — (P. A. Hrobak, Detroit, Mich., 11-18-51)

## PAST AND PRESENT OF

**CHRISTIAN DEMOCRACY IN SLOVAKIA**

JOSEPH A. MIKUŠ

From 1918 until 1948, Christian democracy was a dominant political force in Slovakia. Originated under Hungarian rule at the beginning of the twentieth century, Slovak Christian democracy reaffirmed itself and arose victorious from the ideological chaos which existed in Czecho-Slovakia and in Central Europe after 1918. While Trianon Hungary was the victim of the Communism of Bela Kuhn in 1919, Social Democrats formed the strongest political party in Czecho-Slovakia. It remains the historical merit of the great Slovak Catholic and national leader, Msgr. Andrew Hlinka, for having saved Slovakia from spiritual anarchy. As founder of the Slovak People's Party and its leader, Hlinka designed for Slovakia the right way of Christian democracy. The program of his party was to work "for God and the nation." — What did it mean?

From the religious standpoint, the People's Party always defended the Catholic tradition of the country against a narrow and particularist Czech Husitism which attempted to conquer the Slovak people. In the hard spiritual struggle Slovakia remained loyally on the side of the Roman Catholic Church and in opposition to the effort of the governmental circles of Prague which used all the resources of the State to bring about the "emancipation" of Czecho-Slovakia from the influence of Rome. T. G. Masaryk authored the slogans "Away from Rome" and "Rome must be brought to trial and convicted!" The Slovaks were decidedly opposed to the establishment of the so-called national "Czechoslovak church" in Slovakia, which they recognized only as a tool of foreign spiritual influence.

From the national point of view, the People's Party defended the natural rights of the Slovak nation which were systematically being abbreviated by the Prague Administration. The Czecho-Slovak State in 1918, was supposed to be a federal union, such as the United States, be-

tween two equal partners, Czechia (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) and Slovakia, with a common currency, foreign policy and military defense. In fact, however, the Czechs arbitrarily changed this nationally dualistic State into a strong centralized, unitarian "Czechoslovak" State by the Constitution of February 29, 1920, which was imposed on the Slovak nation by the so-called "Revolutionary Parliament" that had been handpicked by the Prague Government.

In this way, under Czech rule, the Slovaks were deprived of their national rights and became an internal minority. In 1923, the Czech majority in Parliament suppressed the individual constitutional liberties of minorities (the right of free press, free speech, free assembly, etc) by adopting the Internal Security Act. (No. 50-1923) which indicated all efforts toward federalism as subversive. So, "Czechoslovakia" never was, in fact, a country of free political institutions, nor a true democratic State.

For these reasons, the Slovak People's Party claimed — in accordance with dispositions of the Cleveland (1915) and the Pittsburgh (1918) agreements signed by the Slovak League of America and various Czech organizations — a dualist federation, which would bring to an end the privileged situation of the Czechs and carry on the principle of equality of both peoples in the common State. If the Slovak people were disposed, in spirit and in the interests of Christian integration, to abandon certain national prerogatives in favor of a Czecho-Slovak federal government, it was not at all disposed to relinquish the Slovak national idea in favor of a Czech, that is a foreign nationalism.

From the point of view of foreign policy, the Slovak People's Party strongly criticized the military alliance which Mr. Beneš signed in 1935 in Moscow with the Soviet Union.

After the Munich Agreement, when Hitler was given a free hand in Central Europe by the Western Powers, Slovak Christian democracy, the biggest political force in Slovakia, was charged with the task to conduct, at such a difficult stage, the policy of that country. For such a small



nation it was very hard, indeed, both spiritually and politically, to oppose effectively a totalitarian system such as Nazism. An impartial historiography will, nevertheless, recognize the resistance which Msgr. Joseph Tiso, the President of the Slovak Republic, developed during World War II against the attempt of Nazism to establish itself in his radically pro-German elements in the Slovak Government, represented mainly by Vojtech Tuka, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Alexander Mach, the Minister of Interior. The Tuka-Mach combine played up to the Nazis to win their favor and thus to eliminate Tiso and his regime and put Tuka and his followers in their place. But they lacked popular support. Being prevailed upon by the Slovak hierarchy and the people, Msgr. Joseph Tiso decided to stay at his post, and stay he did to the very end.

Tiso's merit consists in having saved Slovakia and his people from territorial dismemberment, which was planned by Hungary and Germany, as proved at the Nuremberg trials, and in having preserved from Nazi influence the spiritual individuality of Slovakia whose Christian tradition goes back to the eighth century.

But Christian democracy in Slovakia faced its hardest task after 1945. Slovakia was at that time occupied by the Soviet Army and taken over by Mr. Beneš's Government formed in the shadow of the Kremlin. Since that time Slovakia has been exposed to a terrific ideological and political pressure from the outside.

In the elections in 1946. Christian democracy in Slovakia manifested its strength. The Catholics, instructed by their hierarchy, gave an heroic example of great political discipline. They voted for the Slovak Democratic Party, which gained 62 per cent of the total electoral vote; meanwhile in Czechia 56 per cent voted for pro-Communist parties (42 per cent for the Communists and 14 per cent for the Social Democrats). Those elections were the best expression of the Western orientation of the Slovak people and of the fatal pro-Soviet position of the Czechs. In this distinction we see the internal paradox of Czecho-Slovakia. Though territorially farther West, the Czechs looked to Soviet Rus-

sia as their best ally and protector, while the Slovaks, the immediate neighbors of the Soviet Union, looked to the Western Powers. The Beneš-Gottwald regime regarded this attitude of the Slovaks as "treacherous" and, therefore, decided to do something about it to save face in Moscow.

In the autumn of 1947, under the pretext of concealing a group of "separatists and conspirators against the security of the State," the Slovak Democratic Party was attacked — not only by the Communists, but the Czech democratic parties, too — in such a way that it could never recover from the blow. Two thousand of its members were imprisoned, among them three of its deputies (Bugar, Kempný, Staško) and one of its representatives in the Government of the "National Front," Vice-Premier John Ursíny. With this "coup de force" by which Prague imposed on democratic Slovakia a Communist majority in the autonomous Government in Bratislava, the biggest political factor in that country was crushed. Having removed in this manner their strongest opponent in the Prague Parliament, the Communists could afterwards easily consolidate their position, shifting simply from the system of "National Front" to that of the "Marxist majority."

**Contrary to what Mr. Hubert Ripka states in his book "Le coup d'Etat de Prague en 1948," there was, therefore, no revolution in Prague in February 1948. There was only a change in the internal structure of the government.**

The present situation of Christian democracy in Slovakia is that of a resisting force to the Communist impact. This resistance is both religious and national.

Catholicism in Slovakia is a proven counter-force to Communism. By the imprisonment of three Bishops, Msgr. Vojtaššák, Msgr. Buzalka and Msgr. Gojdič, and by keeping in house-arrest others of the Hierarchy, the Church finds it impossible to fulfill its obligations. But though there are several hundred priests in jail, though all the Catholic lay elite has been "eliminated," though Christian democracy as a political force has been crushed, the Slovak people nevertheless have retained a deep religious conviction and have defended churches and priests with no more than

sticks and bare hands against the intervention of the State police.

From the national point of view, present-day Czecho-Slovakia offers the Slovaks nothing common to a national State. Their inherent and autonomous rights have been repudiated by Prague once again. Czecho-Slovakia today is simply one of the numerous Socialist Republics of the Soviet orbit. Slovakia has been deprived of national liberty in the name of the Socialism preached by Moscow and executed by Prague. **The Slovaks are firmly convinced that there is only one possible solution to the situation: the application of the right of national self-determination within the framework of a Federated Europe.** This belief is shared by the Slovak League of America and by all organizations of Slovak political refugees in the free world.

Slovak Christian democracy counts and relies on a nucleus of prominent exiled personalities in the United States and Canada: some former Deputies of the Prague Parliament (Dr. Emanuel Boehm, Stephen Blaško, John Daxner, Dr. Michael Zibrin, Rev. Ferdinand Mondok, Dr. Francis Orlický, Stephen Beniak), several professors (Dr. Joseph Cincík, Rev. Bonaventure Buc, Dr. Francis Hrušovský, Rev. Joseph Papin), numerous writers and journalists (George Gajdoš-Breza, Rev. Nicholas Šprinc, Constantine Čulen, Dr. Joseph Paučo, Louis Kandra, Charles Strmeň, John Okál'), and several former Slovak diplomats (Charles Sidor, Dr. John Kaššovic, Dr. Joseph Kirschbaum, Dr. Joseph Omiliak). All these men consider the United States as a fixed point in the universe of Archimedes, from which it will be possible one day, by spiritual and physical strength, to rock Communism from its foundations. They are most willing to contribute their abilities and talents to effect the liberation of Central Europe and the formation of a European Federation with a free Slovakia in it

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**WHO SAID IT? —** "The importance of our treaty with the U. S. S. R. is self-evident. Soviet Russia is rapidly freeing Europe from Nazi tyranny. **Close ties have always existed between Russia and Czechoslovakia, and they have now been strengthened.** We are proud to be an ally of that great power, which is bound to play the leading role in Europe after the war." — (Jan Masaryk to "Overseas News Agency," February 6, 1944).

## SLOVAK FOLKLORE

## THE DEVIL HAS TO WORK

One poor woodcutter went into the mountains with his last piece of bread, which he carried in a small cloth bag. It was to last him the whole day. When he came into the mountains, he hung the bag on a branch and went to work. The poor fellow chopped and chopped and split thick oaks until streams of sweat flowed from his brow. Suddenly out of nowhere a black, dirty devil came unawares from the deepest depths of hades and stole the last piece of bread from the woodcutter's bag.

When he returned to hades, the horny rascal boasted of his deed to his comrades. "Look, this was supposed to last one woodcutter a whole day and I stole it from him."

"What's that, what's that?" roared Lucifer himself.

When Lucifer heard the story, he became very angry at the horny little thief for having dared to steal the last piece of bread from a poor man.

"And for that," said Lucifer, "you will have to serve that poor man for a whole year, commencing forthwith."

The next day, as the woodcutter was again preparing to go into the hills with his ax on his shoulder, the door suddenly opened and a strong young man entered the room.

"Good day, boss!" the stranger said, "how about letting me work for you?"

"Ach, my son, what would I do with you?" replied the woodcutter. "I have nothing to eat myself and, as you see, in that corner all my children are weeping because they are hungry."

"Well, just take me on anyway. For my services you shall owe me nothing, and I assure you that you will be completely satisfied with me."

"Well, then, come with me to chop trees, if that is what you want," said the woodcutter handing him an ax.

Before three days had passed, the hill, which the woodcutter would not have cut in a year by himself, was almost bare of trees, and the rows and rows of cord wood made the old woodcutter happy. From that time on our woodcutter

got along very well, and his children no longer cried in the corner from hunger; they were happy and healthy, because they were satiated.

"Well, boss," began the servant, "you just keep on chopping little by little while I go athreshing somewhere so that you might have bread and enough of everything in the house for the whole winter."

"Go ahead, just go ahead," replied the woodcutter, "and while you're gone, I'll cut as many trees as I can."

In a great wilderness dwelled a wealthy man. Three hundred stocks of grain were in his fields and in his pens he had three hundred steers and three hundred pigs. The woodcutter's servant came to this wealthy man and offered to thresh his grain.

"But where are your companions?" asked the man.

"Do not worry about my companions, just let me know whether you want your grain threshed."

"Of course, I am going to have it threshed, but don't tell me that you are going to do it yourself?"

"Whether I do it or not, you shall see the job done."

"And what do you want for the threshing?"

"Nothing my lord, except what I can carry away at one time," answered the servant.

"Well," the wealthy man mused, "you will not be able to take ten kilos away, so go to it."

When it was midnight, three thousand flails suddenly resounded around the stocks of grain with a wish, whash, wheesh, whoosh! The devils from the fires of hades came to help their comrade. By morning the whole job of threshing was completed and the grain stored in large sacks.

Dawn was just breaking as the thresher called on the wealthy man to come out and see the job he had done. The man could not believe his eyes. The threshing was finished and the rich man was glad it was done so quickly.

"Well done, my lad," said the wealthy man, "and now you may take what is yours for the threshing."

Thereupon the disguised little devil ordered the lord's servants to place sacks of grain upon his shoulders. After ten kilos of wheat were placed upon his shoulders, the master smiled and said: "Well, young man, is that enough?"

"What do you mean enough?" laughed the thrasher. "Just keep piling it on; look I can still hop around with it spryly."

So the servants kept piling the sacks of grain on the thrasher's back until there were no more left. The wealthy man's hair stood up from fear.

"Well, w-e-l-l, now do you think you have enough?" he asked.

But the thrasher let out a roar of laughter, saying: "Not quite enough, my lord, just keep piling on whatever you have. You see I can still dance around with this stuff"

A hundred fattened hogs were taken out of their pens and put on the thrasher's back. The rich man was stupefied. "Well, now perhaps you have enough?" he stuttered.

But the little devil danced around gayly and howled with glee: "Just keep piling it on!"

The wealthy man was bursting with anger, but he kept his word. "Let out a hundred fattened steers," he barked at his servants, "these he certainly will not be able to carry."

But the devil-thrasher took even the hundred steers, laughed in the master's face and then ran off to his boss as if he carried nothing at all.

"Well, boss, this is for you," said the servant unburdening himself in the woodcutter's yard. "Now, even if I do leave you, I do not think that you shall have to fear hunger any more. My year is up, you know, but say, do you know who I am? Do you remember the day when your last piece of bread disappeared in the mountain?"

The woodcutter shook his head and said: "I remember, yes, I do remember."

"Well, now I'll tell you who I am. I am a devil. It was I who stole your last piece of bread and as punishment I had to work for you one whole year. Now my time is up. Farewell."

At that very moment the woodcutter's home was surrounded by laughter as if three thousand horses had brayed. It was the devils who laughed at their comrade because he had to work for a poor woodcutter.



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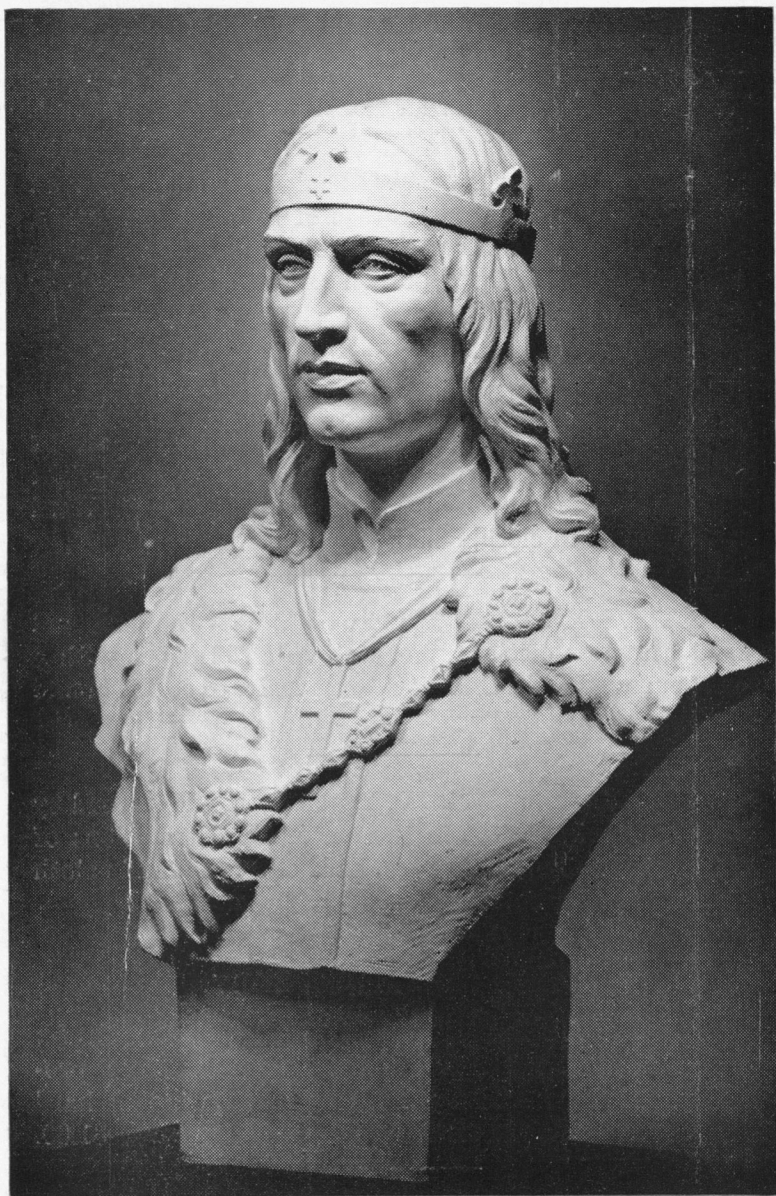
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